

Women, Sex, and God:

Through the Lens of Jungian Theory of Individuation

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by

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Abstract

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This study explores women's experience of sexuality as a path to God through the lens of the Jungian theory of individuation. Secondarily, this study explores how film images may be reflecting something new emerging from the collective unconscious related to reconciling the archetypal energies of sexuality and spirituality. Whereas these energies seem to many to be in opposition, new evidence acknowledges their once-celebrated union. A depth psychological hermeneutical approach is used to examine texts, the researcher's lived experience, and films that place the researcher's personal experience within a cultural context. Insights emerged related to the reconciliation of pairs of opposites, which evolved from the masculine and feminine, sexuality and spirituality, and spirit and matter. The working out of personal complexes led to identifying generational wounds and considering how the researcher's experience may reflect humanity's evolving understanding of its relationship with God. Reconciliation between sexuality and spirituality for the researcher required coming into relationship with the body, which required the capacity to be vulnerable and receptive in order to receive both sexually and spiritually. The wounded masculine within men and women appears to be an obstacle for the vulnerability required for deep connection, which research suggests is a hard-wired human need. Given the surprising and unexpected nature of the researcher's experience

and insights, it makes sense that the interplay between the wounds of sexuality and spirituality can be the driving force of individuation.

Keywords: sex, God, women, spirituality, film theory, individuation, auto-ethnography, feminine, masculine, patriarchy.

Dedication and Acknowledgments

Sometimes in hindsight you can identify one particular moment that set something in motion that otherwise would never have occurred. This moment often emerges out of the response of one human being to the vulnerable sharing of another human being. Of all my amazing professors at Pacifica Graduate Institute, it was the response of Dr. Susan Rowland to what felt like my coming out of the closet that set something in motion that I would never have anticipated. All she said was “I suggest you follow the energy,” and somehow I found the courage to accept the invitation to a journey that changed my life. In addition to her apparent passion for inspiring women who might not otherwise see themselves as scholars, I ate up her no nonsense, direct, and constructive feedback that was meant to turn me into a scholarly writer.

At the same time, I happened to reconnect with a friend at the moment my marriage began unraveling. Billie Smith, whom I had first met when she was what I call a baby lawyer, scooped me up during this pivotal time, which brought together the parallel journeys of death of one part of my life and rebirth in the form of my newfound passion for depth psychology. Weekly conversations over wine continue to resemble live episodes of a Netflix series about women and midlife. Deb Stamp, my friend of more than 30 years, acted as a calming and accepting presence during these past few tumultuous years. She still just lets me go on and on about whatever, and then tells me she always learns something from our conversations. She was pivotal in orchestrating the reconnection with Tom, the name I assigned to my college attraction in this research. The soulful texting between Tom and me over two years acted as a safe vessel of transformation for both of us.

My quarterly lunches at the Royal Garden Chinese restaurant with Dr. Robert Pavlik, my friend and spiritual guide of 15 years, acted as another womb in which to grow. Our conversations always included a series of questions that were meant to help me discover how I might use my newfound passion in service of others. The many texting and phone conversations that took place between my two sisters, Christine and Michele, and me acted as another vessel for transformation. I now understand my new compulsion to over-share is part of the way of processing overwhelming experiences, and I am grateful my sisters indulged me by listening to three-minute voicemail messages and long texts about interpretations of sexual imagery that showed up in dreams or my take on superhero films.

My children Rachel and William have had to bear the brunt of my midlife transformation, which has included devoting many hours to studying and writing. I had to make brave decisions that caused them great suffering, and they have had to watch their mother become someone new, along the way not recognizing me sometimes.

This research topic found me via the intense attraction between the man I refer to as Phillip and me. Our relationship acted as a vessel of transformation for me, and when its purpose was fulfilled, the relationship ended. If I had not accepted the invitation to love that had been presented, everything else that came after would not have occurred. This invitation to explore the reconciling of sexuality and spirituality came from the Divine I am sure.

A marriage that ends ought not to be considered a failed marriage. At the time I gave myself permission to not want to stay in my marriage, I had spent half my life with my husband. Over time I came to appreciate how this 24-year relationship also acted as a

vessel in which to grow, and without it and its unraveling, I might not have been vulnerable enough to be receptive to what the Divine offered me through the encounter with Phillip. My former husband and I are now on different journeys, and yet we will always have a deep connection that goes beyond our shared children.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Stacey Shelby, Dr. Kesstan Blandin, and Dr. Thomas Galten. Their encouragement and thoughtful and constructive guidance and feedback are clearly reflected in my continued growth as scholar and writer.

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The style used throughout this dissertation is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition, 2009), and *Pacifica Graduate Institute's Dissertation Handbook* (2019-2020).

Chapter 1

Women, Sex, and God:

Through the Lens of Jungian Theory of Individuation

Purpose Statement

This study explores the unconscious forces behind women's experience of sexuality and how these experiences may contribute to the process of individuation as defined by C. G. Jung as coming into relationship with the Self, which he also described as a God-image (Jung, 1955, 1958/1984, p. 272, para. 1624). As Freud's view is that sexuality is a way in which we express our deepest desires, and for Jung, part of being human includes a universal desire to find meaning, then it is important to understand how sexuality may be a path to meaning in a religious sense. A depth psychological hermeneutical approach will be used to examine the texts of Jungian theory of individuation, the lived experience of the researcher, and films that reflect the researcher's personal experience within the context of the culture. The method of autoethnography will be employed to examine the lived experience of the researcher, grounded in Jungian theory of individuation, which includes the impact of film on the experience. I hope to facilitate a dialogue between theory and lived experience, identifying themes that emerge in the researcher's reflections that may contribute to understanding women's experience of individuation, as well as to explore how the researcher's experience may reflect an unconscious collective urge to repair what seems like an uneasy relationship between sex and religion.

This study is important because there exists an opening for a new framework to assist people in finding meaning when it comes to their individual lives and how they fit

into the collective. Some have suggested that the continued increase in rates of suicide, depression, and alcoholism reflect a growing sense of meaninglessness (Routledge, 2018). The ways people respond to this loss of meaning seem to play out in opposing forms of either identifying with strict and sometimes extreme systems versus more inclusive and open ideas and sometimes a hesitancy or inability to attach to any one set of guiding principles. Those who are unable to follow either of those paths seem to be at risk for filling that void in destructive ways or becoming trapped in their neurotic symptoms. These recent times arguably point towards the possible extinction of the collective, and one's sense of significance as both an individual and member of a larger community seem to be a critical part of being able to solve what feels like unsolvable problems. I suggest that progress towards reconciling sexuality and spirituality could free up energy otherwise trapped in the shadows of both, resulting in a fresh perspective for looking at many topics besides women's individuation and influencing religion in a way that makes more room for the instinct of sexuality.

Introduction

Introduction to research area or problem. If it is through sexuality that our deepest passions are revealed and our relationship with others and self are formed as Freud suggested, then perhaps the interest in sex and sexuality could reflect an unconscious but intuitive attempt to find more meaning (Downing, 1989/2006, p. 31). Whereas there has been a significant loosening up of sexuality, it played out more like childish rebellion and on a superficial level, leaving the great power of the sexual instinct unconscious and repressed. The repressed sexual instinct can be seen manifesting today in the extremes of sex slavery on the one hand and denial of sexuality as a natural instinct

in many disproven abstinence-only initiatives (p. 31). Both Freud and Jung were important contributors to the field of depth psychology, which recognizes the impact of the unconscious, and both men recognized the mysterious powerful drive of sexuality. Jung (1959/1970) sums it up nicely with the statement, “With the exception of religious longings, nothing challenges modern man more consciously and personally than sex” (p. 344, para. 653), clearly implying a connection between sexuality and the religious instincts, at least in their being the two most powerful and difficult drives with which to wrestle.

Just as sexuality often plays out in extremes, spirituality too seems to play out in the extremes of radical and violent fundamentalism versus radical and violent secularism. Whereas Freud suggested that religion was a childish illusion, Jung suggested that part of being human included a primordial drive to experience wholeness, which is experienced as religious (Palmer, 1997). Jung’s position was that until recently a more dogmatic religious framework effectively assisted people in finding meaning. According to a PEW Research Center survey conducted in 2017, 27% of Americans considered themselves spiritual but not religious, an increase of eight points over five years, spiritual not necessarily meaning no belief in God but a detachment from traditional dogma (Lipka & Gecewicz, 2017). One could consider the increase in the number of people describing themselves as *spiritual and not religious* as a movement towards finding a new ordering principle to replace traditional forms of religious faith (Edinger, 1972/1992, p. 3). At the same time, research also shows that in the United States, religious affiliation and church attendance has been steady for many decades, and that within the religious population, people with more intense and strict beliefs are growing (Iannaccone, 1994).

This paradox of both the pulling away from and moving towards strict dogmatic beliefs could reflect a struggle between the conscious attitude and the unconscious, the unconscious wanting to compensate for a too one-sided extreme conscious attitude on either side. I think this research supports Jung's notion of a strong human disposition to a religious attitude and is also a reflection of how these two opponents together make up what he called the transcendent function, with the ultimate outcome being a new conscious attitude or position (1958/1972, p. 73, para. 145). This struggle seems to have been playing out within my own psyche, specifically through an emotionally charged rejection of my childhood religion of Christianity, which I came to demonize and fear, and now a luring pull back towards the same religion which settled into my shadow over the years. Jung describes the transcendent function as coming into play when one's conscious and unconscious hold opposing views that are no longer able to coexist, the transcendent function acting to create such tension that a compromise must be made, and a new view emerges out of that tension (Chodorow, 1997). This seems to be playing out within sexuality and religion separately, but I wonder if considering what may be an interdependence between sexuality and religion might be a bridge to a new attitude towards sexuality and religion as partnership rather than opponents. Perhaps reconciling the opposition *within* sexuality and *within* spirituality requires reconciling sexuality *with* spirituality.

An uneasy relationship seems to exist between sexuality and spirituality, especially within and among different forms of Christianity. When I think about how I have heard Christians talk about sexuality over the years, not only does this instinct seem to have received the harshest judgment of all the *desires of the flesh*, during the time of

my coming of age in the 1980s, it was common for women to be blamed for men's sexual transgressions, including rape. I often found myself wondering why a woman would be blamed for a man's lack of capacity to control his own actions, and now I can relate it to Jung's suggestion of the fear of the unconscious, specifically man's fear of his own feminine nature. From his study of the symbolism of alchemy, understood by many only as the precursor to chemistry, Jung developed his theory of individuation, the process of an individual's transformation due to one's ego relating to the unconscious (Jung, 1989, p. 209). For Jung, what was projected onto the chemical process of turning lead into gold was an unconscious desire to compensate for the incompleteness of Christianity, specifically the elevation of spirit as consciousness and masculine over matter as nature, feminine, and the body (Jung, 1944/1968, p. 23, para. 26). When one of an opposing pair is denigrated too much, it will find its way out of the unconscious often in destructive ways, in this case the denigrated and repressed instinct of sexuality projected onto literal women and their bodies. If this is true, then it is possible that reconciling the perceived opposites of sexuality and spirituality requires reconciling the perceived opposites of feminine and masculine, and that coming into relationship with the feminine includes coming into relationship with nature, the body, and sexuality. There seems to have been some consciousness about this tension between the opposites of masculine and feminine as reflected in attempts by feminist theologians to evolve past a patriarchal lens to interpreting the Bible, along with popular movements like pro-choice Catholics. The increased use of the label *spiritual* over that of *religious*, the exploration of sexuality, diverse forms of relationship, and fluid identities in contemporary culture reflect a collective compensation for the repression of sexual desire by conventional religion

generally. Likewise, the growing interest in discovering one's personal spirituality could reflect a compensation for a too one-sided and authoritarian model of religion. Less obvious may be the potential correlation between these two movements, an unconscious collective desire to create a new framework with which to form a new partnership between two seemingly opposing core human instincts of sexuality and spirituality. Without any kind of framework, it is not only a lonely path, but there is danger in becoming possessed by individual experiences. For example, during my admitted obsession with online dating and my newly unleashed sexual desire, I wrestled with a fantasy of being sexually submissive, the fantasy so strong I found myself meeting a self-proclaimed and experienced dominant in a hotel lobby. Perhaps it was lucky he looked nothing like his photo and it only took five minutes in a hallway with him to break the spell of my fantasy. Whereas it was not until later that I would come to understand this still-occurring fantasy as more symbolic than literal, I was aware of the power it had over me and I took precautions like letting my sister know where I was on all of my dates and meeting this man during the day. The managed risk I took was important though in the working out of my opposing attitudes having to do with sexuality.

Whereas sexuality and spirituality today often manifest as extremes due to repression and lack of understanding of the power of both instincts, there is something in between these two extremes, namely women who are attempting to carve out their own expression of sexuality and spirituality. Whereas Freud and Jung took sexuality seriously, both men were a product of their time and culture, specifically unable to remove themselves completely from the patriarchal bias of the time even if they wanted to. Their work provided a starting point in that they valued the individual experience, and their

concepts are useful in that they encourage us to look behind our literal experiences for deeper meaning, which once understood, contribute to healing. Author and professor of depth psychology, Lionel Corbett (2012) suggests that experiences of sexuality can bring about a religious feeling of union, and that this is often how people articulate feelings of love (p. 23). Jungian analyst Bud Harris (2007) suggests that the ordering principle Jung refers to as the Self, which is often projected onto particular religious beliefs, actually prompts one on their path toward wholeness or religious experience through sexuality (p. xv). Jung, Freud, and these Jungians are suggesting that sexuality can play out as one's particular path to religious experience or relationship to God. I plan to consider the work of these two authors as I analyze my own lived experience and consider how it may be reflected in the culture via film.

Examining an individual woman's experience of individuation through the lens of sexuality as a path to spirituality, along with the role film played not only in gaining these insights but also how film may be reflecting this in the larger culture, could add to Jungian theory about women's individuation as well as provide further support for the notion that sexuality, rather than being separate from spirituality, actually may support one's sense of spirituality or relationship with God.

Statement of research questions. What might a depth psychological exploration of women's experiences of the relationship between their sexuality and spirituality contribute to the Jungian theory of individuation? How might the researcher's lived experience be a reflection of a collective urge to reconcile the perceived opposing instincts of sex and religion?

Relevance of the topic for depth psychology. At this point in my research, there seems to be some writing on sexuality, sexuality and the sacred, and an expansion of Jung's concepts to women's psychological development. In addition to the existence of an opening to approach individuation specifically through the lens of sexuality and spirituality, Jungian theory of individuation may be incomplete when it comes to women's lived experience. The field of depth psychology has been criticized for avoiding the topics of sexuality (Santana, 2017) and spirituality (Ulanov & Dueck, 2008), thus there is a missed opportunity to offer healing through coming into relationship with both of these powerful instincts considered together. If therapists in general are not providing a framework for their patients in this regard, then the general public has little hope as they are left with self-help resources that do not recognize the unconscious forces of sexuality and spirituality working together. Without an appreciation for the deeper purposes of our sexuality and desire for spiritual wholeness, there is danger in responding to these instincts in a superficial and possibly self-destructive manner. A framework with which to consider the symbolism underneath our desires may assist individuals in discerning when desires are to be responded to literally or imaginatively. There is an opportunity to explore how experiences of sexuality as a path to spirituality play a major role in women's lives. Author Bud Harris (2007) suggests that because both sexuality and spirituality greatly impact our development, there is good reason to better understand these experiences, and this is one purpose of my research (p. xiii). Jung (1954/1968) suggested there are deep primordial drives that have always existed but that they manifest differently in different times and cultures (p. 4-5, paras. 4-7). It could be that women whose sexuality has directed their spiritual path may reflect a larger collective urge to

bring about a new manifestation of archetypal forces that have to do with sexuality and spirituality. Since it is women who have been the main carriers of the feminine, which has been largely left out of the equation within patriarchal systems, including that of Christianity, women's experience in particular should be explored when it comes to what may be emerging from the collective as new manifestations of the feminine, as expressed through sexuality and spirituality.

Definition of terms. It will be important to define many terms for the reader, including depth psychological concepts and terms that are commonly used in our culture that have many meanings and values associated with them. I have chosen the broader term of *sexuality* to avoid being limited by the notion of sex as a literal act, and I use terms like *God* and *spirituality* interchangeably, a reflection of my desire to be inclusive of spiritual experience. Over the course of this research, I came to have more clarity about what these labels meant for me, and this will become apparent as readers make their way through this document. Jung offered the term *individuation* to describe the conscious process of relating to one's unconscious, which brought the difficult task of reconciling what were experienced as opposing forces within one's psyche. One of the most important sets of opposites in Jung's view was that between the masculine and feminine. Whereas he suggested that both women and men have a feminine and masculine, and that they are not tied to gender, his work ended up reinforcing limiting stereotypes when it came to the feminine and women's roles. For example, in *Aspects of the Masculine* (1989/1996), Jung suggested that man's strongest quality was his Logos (reason) and woman's her Eros (relatedness), and that if these qualities became entrenched, a man would become rigid in his opinions and a woman would lack capacity

for reason (p. 20). This study spends a good amount of time offering the reader a brief history of how Jungian's have challenged and expanded Jung's theory in this regard, and I have come to value the expanded definition of feminine offered by Virginia Apperson (2008/2009), co-author with John Beebe of *The Presence of the Feminine in Film*. In addition to traditional Jungian descriptors like nature, instincts, cycle of life, death, and rebirth, she describes the feminine as spontaneous, ambiguous, and unpredictable, the opposite of the masculine need for clarity, purpose, and simple solutions (p. 3). The co-author sums up her sense of the feminine as being able to embody opposite qualities, for example, intensely emotional and related and also intensely detached and ruthless, and that this of course frustrates the masculine (pp. 5-14).

Whereas Jung's theories resonated with me from the start, I could not find a way for my lived experience to fit into his specific thoughts about the feminine and masculine and how these develop within men and women. Perhaps an important task is simply to consider all of these opposites as part of what it means to be human. Or perhaps we do not need the notion of opposites any longer. For example, Jung's theory of psychological type, known by many as the basis of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, offered a theory related to people's seemingly innate disposition when it came to receiving and processing input from the environment, along with a preferred way of relating to one's environment. In his theory, I get the impression Jung did not mean for thinking and feeling to be tied to masculine and feminine or man and woman, but this is what happened, and the first generation of women Jungian's seemed to latch onto this idea, which served only to perpetuate the sexism reflected in some of Jung's theories (Douglas, 1990/2000, pp. 55-58). I am not sure of the value of seeing the thinking function as the opposite of the

feeling function other than to recognize that one can only use one function at a time and one could be too one-sided in thinking, which causes a devaluation of feeling. It is more useful to consider the light and dark side of both functions rather than to see them as opposites. Likewise, when it comes to man and woman or masculine versus feminine, to consider the light and dark sides of both rather than see them as opposites seems useful.

Just as I am purposely considering sexuality in a broader sense, focusing on the unconscious forces and therefore looking at sexuality more symbolically, this is true when it comes to my treatment of spirituality as well. As I have already mentioned, Jung (1937/1969) is very clear that his work is related to the psychological experience of faith as opposed to theological questions, pointing out that we can only know God or the Divine as manifested in images (p. 259, para. 1589). On the other hand, Jung (1963/1989) leaves room for the existence of God when he suggests acknowledging that when we refer to God as an archetype that means God is not a conscious creation and we “bring him closer to the possibility of being experienced” (p. 348). In my personal experience, depth psychology has brought me back to my childhood religion of the Catholic version of Christianity, and my conscious reconsideration and struggling through what has not worked for me could be a reflection of the God image manifesting in a new form, which might be part of a collective experience. Only as I began to unravel personal complexes, did I become swept up by the archetype of God through the archetype of sexuality, feeling as though I was visited by something completely foreign and bringing a sense of purpose to the experience. This conscious struggling is what Jung named individuation, and the ongoing reconciling of what is conscious and what is unconscious brings about a new attitude, this process called the transcendent function by Jung, and a sense of

wholeness and meaning, even if only temporary (Jung, 1954/1972, pp. 223-224, paras. 429-430).

Researcher's relationship to the topic. The road to my research topic has been and continues to consist of a series of awkward, surprising, and numinous events, beginning with a calling to pursue an education in depth psychology for reasons that still remain unknown. It feels as if some transpersonal force is pushing and prodding me at just the right pace or else I may turn and run. It did not take long to become aware that the beginning of my relationship with depth psychology correlated with the beginning of the end of my 24-year marriage. I soon became conscious that I was living in real time theoretical concepts like coming into relationship with my shadow and unraveling parental complexes, and whereas I came to experience depth psychology as my healing and spiritual practice, I would never have anticipated what would come next. Tending to stay in my head, I was completely caught off guard when my persona temporarily disappeared and I felt forced to share with my professor and class that I wanted to write about what I called the *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomenon. I might as well have been naked. Consciously, I thought I was just curious about the intense reactions to the books and film, both positive and negative, but I soon realized that something more was at work. My initial shame at being preoccupied with the fantasy of being submissive sexually eventually evolved into curiosity about the fantasy as potential compensation for having to be in charge of everything in my marriage and my need for control at the expense of a healthy sense of receptivity. The meaning of this fantasy has now evolved into a growing desire to be submissive to something transpersonal, God, my Self.

When I finally had to let go of my fantasy of being able to fix my marriage, I became swept up in a series of events where I felt vulnerable and intensely uncomfortable while setting the most basic boundaries with men. I came to understand this as a budding awareness that my husband represented safety for me after years of experiencing only humiliation during sexual encounters prior to him. I eagerly challenged myself to practice setting boundaries, and once I conquered this basic skill, my unconscious seemed to settle down briefly until my too-serious persona once again disappeared, and I entered a phase of obsessive online dating. In addition to referring to these encounters as practice, I found it necessary to cultivate a sense of humor about my experiences as a coping mechanism, now referring to my life as my own Netflix series. I felt empowered at the thought that I had developed a new sense of empowerment or healthy sexuality, and I have come to appreciate the importance of my encounters with these men so much, that two of them became very good friends.

Consciously compensating for my too developed thinking function—I am a feeling type—I forced myself to try out a technique that Jung (1997) named active imagination to explore my unconscious. I found myself spending time at a bar/restaurant that happened to be owned by an artist, which coincidentally was just two blocks from where my husband and I first lived. The night I forced myself to draw something other than the flowers I always draw, I discovered how closed I was to receiving images from my unconscious. I just started drawing lines that started at around the middle of the page and ended at the edge of the paper. Feeling as though I was in a trance, I probably drew more than 100 lines and I was surprised to see that the empty space in the middle formed a heart, and I colored it in. A feeling of embarrassment came over me as I remarked that

it looked like a picture drawn by a five year old. This moment came to represent my reconnection with my wounded child and coincided with a new obsession around love. A subsequent imaginative dialogue with the two voices in my head revealed an unconscious tension between my male protective lawyer character and my cartwheel turning little girl character that was desperate to be unleashed, which she has been allowed to do, especially on the volleyball court where at 50 I began showing off my ability to still do literal cartwheels.

One other pivotal active imagination activity I participated in was what clinical psychologist Stephen Aizenstat (2011, p. 230) refers to as a dream council. In addition, to inviting my son, three men, and a humming bird to the council as guides, I invited my ancestors, not knowing who might show up. When the couple in their 40s dressed in what looked like ancient Egyptian clothing came forward and I asked them why they came, they shared “Something has been taken from our family.” It was not until the second dream council that they answered my question about what was taken, “The love between a man and a woman.” Becoming more comfortable, patient, and trusting of my unconscious, I gained a major insight about a potential question I might be living for my ancestors having to do with the relations between men and women (Romanyshyn, 2013, p. 63). A subsequent spontaneous drawing effectively captured how at least three generations of the families of my mother, father, and stepfather, had either no men or abusive men present, this resulting in mothers who became bitter and mean. Understanding that my own mean mother and disempowered father and step father had no model for how to be in a healthy relationship with the person they loved enlightened

me to my own dysfunctional pattern of over-adapting to my husband in hopes of not turning out to be a mean wife and mother.

At this point, I was consciously aware that I felt the need to explore issues of sexuality, love, and relations between men and women. I experienced a brief period of calm as I let go of dating and prepared for the final exam and paper to secure a M.A. in Depth Psychology. As I consciously wrestled with Jung's theories about the masculine and feminine, named by Jung as primordial images animus and anima, the calm turned into a numinous three-hour interaction with a younger man that penetrated my mind, body, and soul. During the early months of the relationship there was revealed a mysterious force beneath the conscious experience of our connection that I eventually came to understand as a transpersonal force prodding me to go beyond my secularized approach to spirituality. In addition to each taking a turn projecting our own intolerance onto each other when it came to spiritual beliefs, I felt devastated when he told me he felt conflicted about having sex outside of marriage. I could not believe that after finally feeling empowered sexually that I would be denied, but I did not hesitate to answer his question about whether I wanted to continue in our relationship with an unflinching yes. Our relationship continued to be full of a passion and affection I had never experienced, and as I detached from the need for literal sex, my experience of sexuality with this man increased and broadened, culminating in what I have come to regard as a brief moment of wholeness. It felt as if I had no boundary with anything, no separation, no beginning, no end, just presence. He is not a perfect Christian though, and from time to time we were caught up in passionate physical sex that seemed to compensate for the times we repressed this powerful instinct. As this man admitted his own struggle with powerful

instincts, desires of the flesh he called them, and I became aware of how he represented what was undeveloped in myself, our relationship came to symbolize Jung's theory of individuation, a process of coming into conscious relationship with the instincts.

This is where spirituality and God come into the picture. Even though our relationship for a time did not allow for sexual intimacy, it offered opportunities for safe, mutual, and deep reflection and exploration of religion. Alongside these intellectual reflections occurred a significant number of spontaneous and numinous experiences of religious images accompanied by sexual arousal and sexual images accompanied by religious feelings. The separation of sexuality and spirituality became impossible, and I have come to see these experiences as the guiding force in my individuation. For example, on more than one occasion, prayer led to feelings of receptivity and arousal that were so intense that bringing myself to orgasm was anything but a choice. Finding Ann Bedford Unlanov's (2003) book *Picturing God*, contributed to my ability to let go of the shame and humiliation surrounding my childhood and young adult experiences of my sexuality and sexual encounters, and instead validate my lived experience of sexuality as related to my search for an intimate relationship with God.

At this point, other than feeling compelled to allow both this relationship and my revisiting of my childhood religion to continue, I am unsure of the ultimate goal of my research or individuation journey. I know this research brings together sexuality and religion in a way where there is more conscious attention to how their connection may impact a woman's individuation. My experience seems to reflect a complex and dynamic exploration of the relationship between sexuality and religion, each assisting in reconciling the opposing forces within and between sexuality and religion, this

contributing to an overall sense of purpose. This sense of purpose seems to reflect Jung's notion of wholeness because my sense of emerging purpose causes me to find how I as an individual fit into the collective. What seems to be required for me is an interdependent relationship with my sexuality and God.

Whereas the journaling of every encounter where I felt sexual attraction brought to life my individuation path, a second reading surprisingly illuminated the thread of a search for relationship with God through these encounters. If coming into relationship with the Self, which is religious in nature, may be informed by one's experiences of sexuality, and if experiences of sexuality as a path to spirituality may reflect an unconscious desire for wholeness, it important to explore whether individuation through the reconciling of the instincts of sexuality and spirituality could be pointing to a transcendent third when it comes to the God image of the personal and collective. As part of the path to this insight, specific films connected with me deeply in multiple layers and over time, as I first came to understand how they related to my individual experience, but at the same time being drawn to something that I then saw playing out in the larger culture, either in completely unrelated fields or in my personal or public reaction to films. As I continue to find personal meaning in my experience, I now wish to find the meaning it has within the context of collective experience for the purpose of contributing not only to the field of depth psychology but also to increased appreciation for women's lived experience, and the well-being of individuals and communities.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Summary of Relevant Research Domains

The literature review falls into three categories: (a) depth psychology and spirituality, sexuality, and individuation; (b) women and individuation; and (c) film as a reflection of new manifestations of the archetypes of the feminine, sexuality, and religion emerging from the collective unconscious.

Literature Relevant to Topic

Category #1—Depth psychology and spirituality, sexuality, and individuation.

Spirituality and sexuality. Both instrumental to establishing the field of depth psychology, which asserts the existence of and the importance of studying the unconscious part of the total personality, Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung had opposing views on the nature of religion. Whereas Freud believed that religion itself was a neurosis caused by repressed sexuality, Jung believed that the religious attitude was inherent in the psyche of humanity and served the purpose of assisting the individual in moving towards wholeness (Palmer, 1997, p. 142). For Jung, both the religious attitude, or the search for meaning, and the experience of wholeness were archetypes or psychological instincts deeply ingrained in the human experience, the archetype of wholeness named the Self, and the archetype of the process of working towards wholeness named individuation (p. 144). Whereas the archetypal drives lie within every individual, the form in which they take changes, being influenced by cultural constraints and individual experience. For example, for many the archetype of the Self may be projected onto a specific religious

creed and for others it may be projected onto another image that promises a sense of fulfillment.

Palmer (1997), goes on to articulate Jung's suggestion that symbols of God correlated with symbols of the Self, the numinous experience of these symbols stemming from a fundamental *a priori* desire to become a distinct individual while remaining part of the collective history of humanity, an experience of wholeness (p. 150). Without a conscious awareness of the power of the archetype of the Self, it may be projected onto an image that leads to dysfunction instead of meaning, for example extreme religious fundamentalism, extreme consumerism, or addictions. Finally, for Jung, both the archetypal desire for wholeness and archetypal process that unfolds consciously or unconsciously is so fundamental to the experience of humanity, to repress or deny the religious instinct is to welcome neurosis (p. 161). One could suggest that there is a correlation between the decline in membership of conventional religious traditions and what many call the increasing sense of meaninglessness, and without an effective evolution of or clear replacement for these traditions, the resulting sense of meaninglessness has contributed to increasing occurrences of neuroses, such as anxiety, depression and various forms of addiction. Perhaps my own rejection of religion at a young age contributed to my search for meaning through sexual experiences.

In fact, Jung (1933/1955) made a correlation between what he called a general exodus from Christian churches in the West and the birth of the science of psychology (pp. 228). As the sacredness of religious symbols waned in the face of a growing attachment to a more scientific and rational approach to understanding, individuals were left without a container with which to understand the powerful forces of the collective

unconscious (pp. 232-233). At the same time individuals discarded conventional religion either because its symbols had lost impact or because they had been reasoned away, many continue to be lured to mysterious ancient wisdom, religions of other cultures, or filled the gap by projecting the need for the religious attitude onto dangerous ideas; perhaps a good example of this being how an entire country became swept up by the ideas of Hitler. It could be that the aftermath of WWII ushered in a new level of consciousness, further contributing to the decline in traditional forms of religion and an increase in what seems like a more individual seeking of something to replace it.

Jung's (1933/1955) *Man in Search of a Soul* captures this sentiment that once one's religion no longer adequately can make sense of life, "the psyche becomes something in its own right which cannot be dealt with by the measures of the Church alone" (p. 201). No longer able to live only as part of a collective, one's psyche begins the search either consciously or unconsciously for a new framework, and this seems to be reflected in the increasing numbers of individuals who are on purposeful spiritual quests that involve the turning away in part from materialism and reason and a turning towards their inner world and personal experience of religion (p. 207). Jung warns that our inner world contains a darkness that we may not be ready to face, but it is also the source of insight that may lead to new meaning. Without a framework for this process, one can become overwhelmed by or identified with the contents of the darkness. The psychotherapist may have more to offer the patient than the clergyman and medical doctor because of limitations imposed by creed (p. 227). One important purpose of psychology may be to assist the individual in finding his way back to a religious attitude (p. 217). I appreciate Jung's confession that it was a psychological understanding of

relating to the unconscious that allowed him to access religion, meaning personal and immediate experience versus a blind acceptance of impersonal theological concepts (Jung, 1955, 1958/1984, p. 281, para.1643). Jung, who consistently reminds his readers that his suggestions have nothing to do with the literal existence of God, suggests that God is not satisfied with a righteous and rule-following approach to being human. He reminds us that it was God that put the serpent in the Garden of Eden knowing full well that Adam and Eve would give in to the temptation to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (p. 262). I like Jung's suggestion that those who cling to the Word (have an intellectual understanding only) in order to avoid experiencing the will of God (which can prompt one to do something that seemingly goes against the Word), and then reconciling all of the opposites involved in integrating that experience, are avoiding individual responsibility (p. 278). Jung's suggestion that it is the working through of the moral struggle that prompts one to grow spiritually as opposed to simply accepting doctrine intellectually seems to offer something important for those seeking a new way to relate to the Divine. This concept liberated me personally to be able to set aside judgment of myself in order to unravel the meaning of my struggle over the years with sexuality and spirituality.

Jung suggests that it is through religious symbols that man finds meaning and that the symbols of traditional religion are no longer speaking to a growing and significant number of people. Consequently, becoming conscious of the role symbols play in our lives as individuals and as a collective is important. In *Man and His Symbols* (Jung, von Franz, Henderson, Jacobi & Jaffe, 1968), Jung suggests that it is often great suffering that prompts reflection on the meaning of life. Once conscious, one is then faced with the

impossible task of finding a system of meaning that meets the impossible standard of proof modern society has established for the acceptance of a religious framework (p. 75). There seems today to be a counter movement of people searching for a new framework for meaning, but I would suggest that in general this searching is for something outside of oneself, and what is needed is a cultivation of sensitivity to symbols that speak to our inner world. I agree with Jung's suggestion that modern society has negatively impacted our ability to respond to symbols, and this has cut us off from not only our inner life but from our ability to connect with other human beings (p. 84). Personally, I have had to learn how to cultivate an openness and respect for another way of knowing that feels irrational but which led to insights that I likely would not have gained about my own life experience in another way. In an age where it is clear science and the rational approach have not been able to make life better for the majority of humans, it could be said a kind of compensation is occurring that includes a new embrace of symbolism.

Digging deeper into what Jung meant when he talked about the instinctual religious attitude, it may not necessarily be religion that people have been turning away from but the seeming emptiness of the words that attempt to communicate the significance of events that happened centuries ago. With a lessening capacity of religion to facilitate the connection between human being and God, it is understandable that those for whom traditional religion does not connect would seek either consciously or unconsciously elsewhere for this inner experience. Many choose to remain with their religion in place of an inner experience that connects them personally to God (Ulanov, 2003, p. 168). This is unfortunate because the focus on words seems to undermine religion; instead of offering one the opportunity to truly know redemption, for example,

one is distracted by the focus on whether a religious event can be proven scientifically or whether one creed is right over another. Digging even deeper, for Jung (Palmer, 1997) the instinct for religion serves a higher purpose in one's individuation, the conscious process of unfolding into one's fullest personality as reflected both in one's uniqueness and place in the collective. In order to be unique, one must have the capacity to make judgments and the fortitude to hold opinions that are contrary to the collective in which he exists, and Jung suggests that without an authority beyond the physical world, judgments are not possible (pp. 150-151). I take this to mean that extreme mass-minded ideas could have a particularly strong attraction for those who lack a relationship with their own inner authority. Without a strong sense of connection to a higher authority, people may feel helpless in the face of events that do not make sense. This sense of helplessness could be lessened upon assigning responsibility to another for one's position, further eroding one's capacity to challenge mass-minded and extreme ideas. As traditional forms of religion, for example Christianity, began focusing on defending doctrine, turning attention away from cultivating the individual's relationship to the inner experience of God, it participated in its own decline. Today the church could be said to be undermining the moral authority of God through its own contribution to the mass-mindedness of the individual who now lacks the fortitude to stand up to the atrocities that happen all around him. Traditional religions, perhaps by focusing on building communities of individuals who agree with its code, have traded away instilling in its followers the capacity to call on one's relationship with God during these times. Jung suggested that it is the religious function that helps the individual connect with some kind of higher authority, this authority critical to opposing the potentially devastating mass-

mindedness of people whose authority lies in the external, rational, and conscious world. With decreasing numbers of people feeling personally connected to this type of higher authority, offering a new lens through which to consider religious experience in order to become aware of what one is unconsciously seeking is important (p. 150-151).

Jungian analyst Ann Ulanov (2003) builds on Jung's theory that the desire to connect to something transcendent is part of the psychic makeup of human beings when she suggests that the path to the transcendent requires coming into relationship with both the unknown realm of the unconscious and the unknowable God (p. 1). My personal experience confirms Ulanov's suggestion that a major contribution of depth psychology on religion is to "reveal God working in our own personal depths" (p 59). Ulanov agrees with Jung that for many people the symbols of traditional religion are not effectively allowing them to live fully in connection with God, and what is left is a disembodied experience of faith based on words, further suggesting that today's clergy have the burden of helping people close the gap between their personal images of God and those offered in tradition and scripture (p. 168). This is a refreshing perspective because it honors one's subjective experience of how God is working through them instead of dismissing, or worse, repressing images that if explored could bring one into deeper relationship with Self, others, and God. The author does an excellent job using depth psychology to suggest how our images of God are formed as a result of the beliefs about ourselves that we adopt from the external world (introjection), what we do not want to see in ourselves that we make others carry for us (projection), and ultimately our images of God being rooted in the relationship between self and other (p. 171). I take this to mean that as we are able to accept ourselves fully, releasing others from the burden of

carrying what we deny in ourselves, we begin to see ourselves in the other and the other in ourselves, ultimately coming into a space where we meet God (p. 177). Our personal images of God, whether beautiful, ugly, embarrassing, sexual, or violent are important and act as a potential doorway to a relationship with God or the transcendent, and Ulanov emphasizes the need to put them all out on the table to be worked with like a puzzle until they evolve into new images that are informed by God (p. 181). Ulanov's work is important for my topic because I believe that God was working through me beginning at a very early age through sexuality and my relationship with men but without any kind of framework or adult guidance with which to talk about my images and to put my sexuality into context, I swung from feeling sexually powerful to feeling humiliated as I sought to relate to my sexuality. I believe there is a need to offer some kind of framework for women to consider the deeper forces that underlie their openness to and experiences of sexuality.

In addition, Jung (1963/1989) suggested that Christ is an archetypal image, which he identifies with the Self, but that it appears in Christian dogma as incomplete because of Christianity's splitting off of evil from God onto man (p. 334). Offering a new framework for considering how the Christ archetype may be in the process of manifesting in a new more complete form is important. In *Answer to Job* (1960/2010), Jung takes on how this story of God torturing Job for no apparent reason impacts believers psychologically. He suggests that in the Old Testament, God was understood as both good and cruel, reflecting a sense of unity, and in the New Testament God's cruel part was separated and projected onto man, thus a new dualism emerging (p. xi). Jung's psychological analysis of the story of Job is the working out of that disconnect of God

creating everything but only being good. Jung is suggesting that this story represents an evolution of the God-image, an evolution that reflects the need for God's need to become more conscious of his own evil, and to become man, thus foreshadowing the new God-image of Christ as God-man (p. 108). In my personal experience, the cross symbol has come up from my unconscious many times during the past year, but it has also been accompanied by anxiety, because for me it is associated with a religion that subordinates women to men. There is a resistance in me to the image, but knowing that how I relate to the symbol may be contributing to the evolution of a collective God image causes me to move toward the image instead of away from it. I suspect that I am not alone in my experience, and perhaps this is reflected in continuous feminist attempts to contribute to the evolving interpretation of the Bible in order to make room for the feminine and for women.

In his book *Beginner's Guide to Revelation: A Jungian Interpretation* (1994), Robin Robertson, clinical psychologist and author of multiple books on Jungian psychology, suggests that instincts are expressions of spiritual needs, and the desire for sex specifically can be a manifestation of overwhelming energy straining to be released, this energy related to something new emerging when one is able to hold the tension between the opposites (p. 84). The author goes on to suggest that in this case, where the desire for sex is rooted not in the physical need for sex but is an expression of a spiritual need, if one mistakenly takes this desire to be a desire for physical sex, it brings only temporary relief and nothing is resolved when it comes to satisfying the deeper spiritual need (p. 84).

Aside from what Robertson (1994) has to say about the interdependent relationship between instincts and spirit, his work seems to suggest that looking at traditional religious texts through a depth psychological lens can help us come to know in more than an intellectual manner the deeper truths that relate to our relationship with God. In his interpretation of the Bible's final Book of Revelation, he reminds us that one way we can consider the Bible is as a story of the evolution of consciousness of humanity of our relationship with God. What is particularly exciting to me is the author's suggestion that this final book of the Bible, aside from how it is interpreted theologically, can be viewed as a container in which to view the psychological struggle individually and collectively during this current time in history, which often seems to resemble the coming of the end of the world as we know it. Robertson digs deeply into the rich symbolism offered in this book, and a specific part of his interpretation has captured my attention when it comes to suggesting that the seven churches with which John is to share God's vision can be seen to represent the seven attitudes of our day, which include losing faith in our ability to deal with issues; feeling powerless as we passively witness evil; accepting false teachings to avoid the hard work of being in the transition of something new; living only for the moment; being too frightened to take a stand; and not accepting responsibility for our role in developing spiritually (p. 32).

For Robertson (1994), the Bible's Book of Revelation is about arriving at a major transition in the evolution of humanity in our relationship with God, specifically reconciling the opposites of spirit and matter, which he describes as mankind as animal and mankind as being connected to the Divine (p. 110). He suggests that mankind's first attempt to understand the connection to God led to idolizing the intellect—or the

masculine. His interpretation of the Book of Revelation suggests that the new consciousness will bring together the masculine and the feminine, spirit and instinct and that the struggle is to hold both of them in balance and not give in to the temptation to choose one over the other (p. 173). Where once Christ was an adequate symbol, Robertson suggests that the Book of Revelation can act as a container in which we can consciously participate in the struggle that will lead to something new (p. 111). The author's interpretation of the Book of Revelation feels like a metaphor for Jung's individuation process on both an individual and collective level, the purpose being some kind of ultimate reconciling of or at least a new capacity to take responsibility for consciously struggling between our instincts as humans and the part of us that is Divine. The author points out that both of these aspects are reflected in the Bible's story of creation, which tells of God creating Adam from dust (matter) and bringing him to life through God's breath (spirit) (p. 127). This text supports my suggestion that the deeper forces of sexuality can be seen to be a deliberate prompting by the Self, the Self being the mediator of God's communication with us, to come into relationship with that something transcendent, which brings a sense of meaning, unity, and the wholeness of which Jung speaks.

The initial pages of *The Bible and the Psyche: Individuation Symbolism in the Old Testament* (1986), by Jungian analyst Edward Edinger connected with me deeply, leaving an unexpected feeling of brokenheartedness. I experienced Jung's quote about our needing to read the Bible in order to understand psychology as a personal warning that I would not truly understand myself without reading it. Grief filled me as I admitted that I was one of those people Edinger described as having "already slipped off the ridge of

faith" (p. 11), and for whom only a psychological approach to understanding the Bible is available. These sentiments describe my experience recently of feeling tension between being open to receiving what Christianity has to offer coupled with strong resistance and even fear for reasons I can only partially comprehend and articulate at this time. The author presents the Bible as the evolution of Western man's relationship with God and suggests the events can also be seen to reflect the evolution of the relationship between ego and Self, pointing to events as images of the process of individuation (p. 13). Just as Jung lamented at the decreasing capacity for Christianity to serve as an effective container for Western people to relate to the transpersonal, Edinger's work seems to be a bridge to what is yet to unfold when it comes to the transforming God-image. Aside from whether one accepts Biblical events from a theological standpoint, one can see them as reflecting the painful process of individuation. Personally, depth psychology led me to explore a religion I rejected in my youth, and my personal reunion experience could be a reflection of something collective. From conscious work at the individual level may emerge a new kind of God-image that is able to resonate with the collective. Whereas the events Edinger analyzes are compelling, the ones that are most relevant to my topic have to do with the reconciling of spirit and matter, specifically the body, sexuality and the feminine. Edinger points out that the Biblical account of the encounter between Solomon and Sheba hint at reconciliation between spirit and nature, but the healing is not complete (p. 100). Consequently, I will be looking further at two female figures in the Old Testament, Esther and Divine Wisdom as she appears in Psalms, Proverbs, and personified as the Shulamite in Song of Songs.

In Edinger's (1996/2015) *The New God-Image: A Study of Jung's Key Letters Concerning the Evolution of the Western God-Image*, the author suggests that the 14 letters presented in his book may offer more clarity about Jung's thoughts about how the Western God-image is evolving than in his more formal writings. I appreciate Edinger's concise presentation of six stages in the evolution of the Western God-image and how we can see them present in our own psychological development as layers (p. xv). He points out that the current transformation of this God-image is happening through the individuation process, which is possible because of the discovery of the psyche, which allows us to reflect separately about the psychological experience of God versus one's faith (p. xxi). In addition to strengthening my understanding of Jung's work when it comes to religion, Edinger's three steps will contribute to my capacity to understand how this is operating through my personal individuation process and how my evolving God-image is related to what may emerge from the collective (p. xxii).

One could suggest that Jung was deeply motivated by a desire to explore how the symbolism of Christianity might remain relevant in the face of significantly growing numbers of people who began to abandon the faith. The work of Edinger (1986) and Ulanov (2003) seem to reflect this spirit as they both offer depth psychology as a bridge for those who cannot accept the traditional presentation of Christianity on faith but can experience its teachings in a way that honors one's personal relationship to the Divine.

In her book *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (2012), Professor of Feminist Theology Rosemary Radford Ruether traces the history of attempts and evolving paradigm shifts that have contributed to a modern but marginalized interpretation of Christianity that seeks to compensate for the one-sided interpretation

that subordinates the feminine, women, the body, and nature. What is interesting and relevant to my topic is that whereas a growing number of people continue to distance themselves from Christianity, there is a compensating movement of those, who unlike radical fundamentalists seeking comfort in a rigid interpretation, seek to evolve Christianity beyond patriarchy and its one-sided valuing of the masculine, men, and spirit. There is something about Christianity that seems to have staying power, and the author's research is empowering because she points to the dissent that existed from the beginning when it came to interpreting the meaning of the events that grew into Christianity, and that its teachings seem to contain the seed for an interpretation that reflects God's creation of man and woman as equals, and that what needs redeeming is man's natural and sinful desire to have dominion over others and nature (p. 252). In my reading of this work it is impossible for me to discern whether the author is defining "man" in this case as reflecting humanity in general or literal man, because it has been literal man who is responsible for creating and forcing patriarchal and other systems of domination. On the other hand, what has been woman's role in accepting and perpetuating these systems? Her suggestion that the Jesus story has a particular attraction for feminist theologians caused me to think about my own attraction to the story and the fact that I imagine Jesus as both male and female, and I wonder about what new God-image may be stirring within the personal unconscious of individuals and what may emerge from the collective (p. 253). As Edinger (2015) points out, the new image or images are not likely to be identified until a great many individual experiences become known and possibly evolve into a single or set of images that captures the hearts and minds of a significant portion of the collective (p. xxii).

Radford Ruether's (2012) book is important for my work for many reasons, including her addressing the challenge of gender. For example, we can fall into the trap of defining the feminine in a way that even if valued, it still remains the opposite of masculine, and then efforts to integrate more of the feminine into our image of God could be perceived as integrating something into God that is still seen as God's lower or less valuable half (p. 255). This text articulates many things I sensed over the years that were not fully conscious or able to be articulated by me in words. I never imagined that I would be excited to explore my rejected childhood religion, and I have felt great fear in doing so, but I now have hope that it is possible for Christianity to evolve beyond patriarchy. It was the meeting of the young man with whom I remain in relationship for two-and-a-half years, our mutual projections of religious intolerance onto each other—mine for his rigid Christian views and his for my loosely-formed views, followed by his heartfelt conflict over having sex outside of marriage—that prompted my exploration of the connection between sexuality and spirituality.

In his book *Re-visioning Psychology* (1976/1992), James Hillman, considered to be the founder of archetypal psychology, analyzes the current state of the field of psychology, identifying underlying fantasies that have resulted in a loss of prioritizing soul-making as its purpose (p. xv). Unlike Jung, who offered a conceptual framework to help one reconcile the opposites, which was required to bring about moments of wholeness, Hillman challenges the concept of one single leader of the psyche—the Self—as a monotheistic fantasy. Instead, Hillman embraces a polytheistic view of the psyche where the soul presents characters and events that derive from the archetypes, which we may come to know as we find the myth of which they are playing out in our

lives (p. 22). I like Hillman's suggestion that these archetypes are using us as a kind of vessel through which to express themselves, and that they are autonomous and intentional, because that is what it feels like to be overtaken by a complex and then to find the meaning in the experience. These many characters that make up one's psyche move forward or backward and in ebbs and flows, reflecting and depending on the will of the archetypes. Hillman offers the Greek myths as a framework specifically because Western thought and systems grew out of ancient Greek society. He suggests that the Greek gods and goddesses can serve as vehicles for personifying the disparate and conflicting personalities within our psyche; these personalities assert themselves through intense emotions and symptoms like anxiety and depression.

For Hillman (1976/1992), soul is a perspective, which comes into play in the space between an event that happens to us and the meaning of the event, where we come to know the meaning, and we come to know the meaning of a specific experience through the imagination, which is religious in nature (p. xvi). Expanding on Jung's notion of archetypes, Hillman offers a framework that challenges what he calls psychology's fantasies about psychology being a science, an ultimate goal of psychic unity, and the hero's journey as the template for one's psychological journey. He takes the reader on a journey back in time to reconnect to the field's root purpose of caring for the soul and its connection to religion, which has traditionally been the place of soul-making (p. 23). At the heart of Hillman's psychology is a prioritizing of soul-making over treatment, and just as Jung suggested the language of psyche is the image, he suggests that image-making is the path to soul-making (p. 11).

Two limitations of Hillman's (1976/1992) framework though are whether the Greek myths as we understand them, are limited by a patriarchal lens, and that of course there are other systems of myth that may be more helpful to some than those of the Greeks. Like Ulanov (2003) and Edinger (2015), Hillman (1976/1992) offers depth psychology as a complementary tool for religion to help people move from a focus on religion as simply words that do not seem to elicit the same kind of numinous experience as they once did, to adopting a soul or reflective perspective in their quest in the struggle between good and evil. Personifying those parts of us that we tend to judge, as the Greek gods and goddesses who capture that essence, seeing our pathology—anxiety, depression, obsessive behaviors—as our soul's attempt to get our attention, and then psychologizing in order to understand a deeper meaning I think could result in less projecting, making it easier to wrestle with our own potential evil (p. 38). For example, it has been easier for me to accept my passive-aggressive tendencies by personifying them onto a character even if not a specific god or goddess, creating some distance between that negative part of myself and me.

Jung made a connection between religion and sexuality when he suggested that both instincts are intensely individual experiences, which are not bound by convention, and in the process of experiencing and managing the light and dark sides of the archetypal drive one finds a truth that sometimes forces a challenge to an old way of thinking (Jung, 1922/1970, p. 97, para 198). In fact, the modern man or modern woman, defined by Jung as one who can pull herself above the collective of which she is a part, has no choice but to experience things for herself, her new understanding changing her perspective so permanently that she must live in a way that honors this new authentic and

personal understanding (p. 100, para. 209). It is interesting that the way Jung described the challenge of sexual relations between men and women in the early 20th Century seems relevant today. Women especially have found themselves finding their own truth when it comes to sexuality, and in living in a way that honors their truth, have been subject to all sorts of judgment as they find new ways to be in relationship with men, with the world, and with themselves (p. 102, para. 210). Jung believed women were particularly suited to the task of bringing a new consciousness to the importance of soul and relationship in order to compensate for a too one-sided valuing of logic, consciousness, and spirit. It makes sense that this compensation necessarily requires a revaluing of the body and the instinct of sexuality, and perhaps this is what is behind the increased desire on the part of women to explore their sexuality (p. 94, para. 195). Unfortunately, there seems to be little consciousness about the unconscious forces driving this important compensation, reflected in what seems to be a focus on quantity, strategy, and tools versus an exploration of the meaning of their exploration both on an individual and collective perspective.

Author of *In Search of Aphrodite: Women, Archetypes and Sex Therapy* (2016), and Jungian-oriented psychotherapist Chelsea Wakefield takes the idea of individuation through sexuality a step further, suggesting that “when we begin to move sexuality beyond the behavioral realm, beyond the ego identity, and consider it as an expression of the Self, it becomes a pathway of individuation” (p. 42). Considering Jung’s position that the Self is behind the scenes presenting us with life situations that are meant to be opportunities to come into deeper relationship with the Self, it could be argued that women’s sexual experiences are an important source of insight in this regard. When

talking about third-party sexual experience, Wakefield suggests that there is not much Jungian inquiry into the intense somatic experiences of erotic attractions, “the deeply felt eroticism that is awakened by these attractions” (p. 43). She suggests that Jungian theory tends to psychologize and spiritualize these experiences and that prevailing therapy tends to skew towards the repair of relationships, disregarding the possible agenda of the Self, acting through the experience. I agree with her notion that women generally are breaking out of societal constraints when it comes to expressing sexuality, but that the focus seems to be on doing rather than on being. There seems to be a great opportunity to help women explore the deeper forces underneath their sexual exploration that are connected to their unfolding personality and search for meaning. I personally experienced this prejudice towards a goal of reconciliation, intuitively understanding the look of disappointment on one of my first therapist’s face as projection when I shared my long-coming decision to divorce my husband. Wakefield offers an excellent history of the study of sex and educates us that only recently has it begun to be assumed that women are sexual beings that not only want to experience pleasure, but that this pleasure is tied to their desire to experience depth, meaning, and transcendence. She offers an archetypal approach to help women identify the different characters within their psyche that contribute to or inhibit their being in touch with Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of love, as well as to understand the light and dark expressions of every archetype. Her underlying focus is on sexuality as a way of being versus a sexual act. “The sparkle and life energy of Aphrodite is not dependent on having a partner and is not limited to genital sexuality. It is based on woman’s capacity to be passionately engaged with her life” (p. 45). Wakefield does an excellent job of establishing, illustrating, and prioritizing sexuality as an important

individuation path, and she suggests that many women are searching for meaning through sexuality. She does not however talk about sexuality specifically as a path to spirituality or as a way of coming into deeper relationship with God, although it may be implied in her suggestion that through sexuality women are seeking meaning.

In addition to Jung's suggestion that part of being human includes an instinctual drive towards wholeness, this experience being religious in nature, he suggested that sexuality is strongly associated with the desire to achieve wholeness (Jung, 1958/1970, p. 344, para. 653). Psychotherapist Edward Santana (2017) in his book *Jung and Sex* suggests that whereas Jung was on one hand a kind of liberator for sexuality, the attention paid to his break with Freud overshadowed his work in the area of sexuality, which subsequently led to a general avoidance of sexuality in the work of Jungian therapy. Santana does an excellent job of illuminating Jung's recognition of the intense connection between sexuality and spirituality with one's path to individuation. "These expressions of the search for the sacred are in part extensions of Jung's notions of the deeper aspects of sexuality and echo his theories of individuation" (p. 59). There is an opportunity to bring sexuality out of the shadow, along with its connection to spirituality, and to do this through the examination of lived experience.

There not only was a time when the feminine was honored in the form of the Goddess, there was a time when the sexual nature of the feminine was honored as well. In their book *The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspect of the Feminine* (Qualls-Corbett, 1988), the authors ask and try to answer an important question having to do with the impact on culture of the shift from reverence for women's sexuality reflected in historical accounts of sexual ceremonies that took place in sacred temples to the denigration and exploitation

of women's sexuality in modern society. The women who cared for the temples and performed the ceremonies were seen to embody the goddess of love, passion and sex, and the ceremonies performed were seen to bring these energies into the lives of human beings, connecting sexuality and spirituality (p. 13). The authors suggest that patriarchy's elevation of the masculine over the feminine has wounded both men and women, preventing both genders from having a healthy relationship with the masculine and feminine within themselves and projecting that loss onto others (pp. 8-9). I appreciate their emphasis that bringing together sexuality and spirituality is not about having license to simply engage in sexual acts in an unlimited manner. Rather, seeing sexuality as spiritual implies a sense of responsibility to something that transcends our literal lives. To imagine the role of the archetypal feminine as opening the masculine to the "potency of penetrating to the Divine, and the feminine to the rapture of surrender to it" (p. 9) is beautiful and lifts one out of the literal experience of life.

The authors' work validates the growing intuition of many women of the rightness of sexual experiences, but without an understanding of the archetypal forces driving the increased sexual activity, both women and men are likely to miss an opportunity to come into deeper relationship with themselves, others, and some kind of transpersonal presence to assist with meaning making. Whereas the authors offer real stories of psychological trauma that occurs when both women and men exist in the split between the physical and the spiritual, there is an opportunity to share stories of what it looks like when women explore or even overcome the split between sexuality and spirituality or experience a sense of wholeness.

In his book *The Soul of Sex: Cultivating Life as an Act of Love* (1998/1999), Thomas Moore suggests that it is the soul that is a bridge or mediating force between the body and spirit, and by consciously identifying the sexual archetypes living through us and their intersection with our spiritual attitudes, we may be able to reconcile sex and morality, as well as uncover our deepest desires (p. 5). One theme that seems to be emerging in my review of texts that speak to the important relationship between sexuality and spirituality is the emphasis on the conscious and responsible struggle to reconcile these seemingly opposing parts of being human, that in fact it is through the struggle that a sense of individual morality emerges. As I consider the continual loosening and challenging of conventional moral codes related to sexuality combined with a more individual and subjective view of morality, there seems to lack a framework with which to consciously wrestle with the unleashed and formerly repressed instinct, and instead of coming into a mature relationship with one's sexuality, many become addicted to the temporary fulfillment that accompanies physical sex. Whereas culture in general has constrained sexuality to the realm of the body, Moore suggests that sexual attraction is led by our soul's search to come into connection with our deepest desires, and connecting with these desires are paths to the eternal (p. 9). Consequently, the partner to whom we are sexually attracted acts as a kind of portal to this eternal realm. One unintended consequence of well-intended moral codes has been to cut people off from an important path to developing spiritual maturity, which I assume is one of the goals of religion. What feels like a focus on enforcing moral codes and judging those who fail in adhering to them, one could argue has generally worked against religion's goal of contributing to the spiritual development of its followers.

Jungian analyst M. Esther Harding (1933/1990), who was praised by Jung for her work on expanding his theories to women's psychology, describes the tension between moral codes, which are meant to provide guidance in relating to our instincts, and being fully human. She suggests that these frameworks are necessary, and the times of transition between the breaking down of one framework and the emergence of a new framework, lead to behaviors that end up devaluing the instinct (1998/1999, p. 200). The recent #Metoo movement seems to also represent a similar paradox. Whereas the movement has resulted in a new level of accountability, there has been an equally strong counter response to further constrain sexuality, pushing sexuality further into the shadow. Moore suggests one can plainly notice the discrepancy between how Jesus is portrayed in the Gospels as tolerant, in opposition with the moralists of his day, and as compassionate and even sensual versus the Jesus as worshipped by many today as rule giver and judge (p. 68).

It is important to rescue sexual energy or Eros from those who have locked it away, but without a framework or container in which to come into relationship with our natural sense of desire to connect, many may continue to fear and repress its powerful and often misunderstood meaning as an obstacle to or enemy of spirit (Moore, 1998/1999, p. 22). Moore seems to be asking people to both reflect on the deeper meaning of the role of sexuality in one's life, the act of reflection perhaps enlivening one's soul, the bridge between the physical and the spiritual. I like the way Jungian-oriented therapist Chelsea Wakefield (2016) describes Eros as an "irresistible energy" that draws us to experiences where we relate in a way that mutually reveals each other's soul (p. 71). This may or may not be a calling to be literally sexual, and that confusion

may contribute to a fear of the erotic. In addition, meeting someone on a soul level requires the kind of vulnerability that without a framework or container in which to experience it may lead to suffering that has no context in which to experience it.

There seems to be an opportunity to consider how women's sexual experiences may contribute to their individuation and spirituality. During a time of growing resistance to self-labeling one's sexual orientation, Professor of Religious Studies Christine Downing's (1989/2006) consideration of same-sex love in ancient and modern times in *Myths and Mysteries of Same-Sex Love* contributes to an increased openness to sexuality and sexual experience as important in especially women's relationship with their own feminine and Divine nature.

Jungian analyst Bud Harris (2007) seems to reflect Freud's notion that sexuality is a driving force behind how we relate to self, others, even the Divine, and he brings to life Jung's concepts through stories that connect desire, soul, healing and spirituality. The aim of his book *The Fire and the Rose: The Wedding of Spirituality and Sexuality* is to inspire a sense of the sacred sexual in the reader, and it does allude to personal stories, but there seems to be an opportunity to go deeper into the individual experience, especially that of women.

Individuation. Whereas Jung suggested that the unfolding of one's personality over a lifetime is a naturally occurring process, he defined individuation as consciously relating to one's unconscious (Jung, 1954/1968, p. 40, para. 84). This realization of one's shadow typically comes only after a life crisis that so challenges one's assumptions about life that the individual has no recourse but to surrender and become open to new ways of looking at things and new ways of finding meaning in life (Jung & von Franz, 1964, p.

169). Jung suggested that the second half of life was a natural time of potential transformation from a life focused on meeting the ego's needs for security, achievement and individualism to a life focused on self-reflection and seeing oneself as a member of the collective of humanity (Hollis, 2005, p. 10).

The process of individuation as developed by Jung requires the reconciling of opposites, which comes in many forms (Jung, 1954/1968, pp. 288-289, para. 523-524). One important set of opposites is the masculine and feminine, which could be considered one of the most challenging to reconcile, because the notion of feminine and masculine has been strangled by patriarchy, which not only values the masculine over the feminine, but connects the masculine to the male gender. Whereas Jung suggested that all individuals have both a masculine and feminine within them, his psychological theory is admittedly a masculine psychology and his descriptions of the feminine often reflected the sexist stereotypes of his time. Patriarchy has not only tied the feminine and masculine to the female and male respectively, it has defined what the feminine and masculine mean, and has elevated the masculine over the feminine. The result has been that both men and women to different degrees have repressed their own sense of femininity, leading to incompleteness in relationship to themselves and especially in intimate relationships (Qualls-Corbett & Woodman, 1988, pp. 8-9).

The opportunity for the individuation process to begin depends on one's willingness to come to terms with one's inner center, which Jung called the Self (Jung & von Franz, 1964, p. 169). Typically, it is the suffering that comes as a result of the failure to make sense out of life that prompts one to have no other choice but to turn inward instead of projecting the fault onto something or someone external. Those who

consciously turn inward are said to be on the individuation path, and those who turn away from their unconscious often use destructive means to evade the heroic journey of individuation, such as addiction. There is reason to procrastinate this turning inward, as the first task of individuation is to bring light to all of the things about oneself one wants to keep hidden, especially from oneself. Jung referred to this gathering place of unconscious contents as the shadow, and there is both a personal and collective shadow. It is the accepting and coming to terms with one's shadow side that creates an opening to develop a new attitude about life—finding meaning where there was none and making sense of what once was senseless (p. 170).

Beyond the courage it takes to face the attributes that one does not like about oneself—which until this point have been projected onto other people—coming into relationship with one's shadow is tricky because it is the repression of those things that have caused the projection onto others in the first place. If one rages against selfish people, bringing light onto how one exhibits selfishness may cause one to compensate by trying to repress a sense of selfishness even more, which of course will just strengthen the destructive nature of one's own selfishness. There are times to be selfish, and the task is to come into a healthy relationship with one's selfishness (Jung & von Franz, 1964, p. 178).

Von Franz (1964) clarifies that not only does the unconscious speak most directly to the individual through dream symbolism, but also that dreams over time illuminate a pattern which reflects one's process of individuation. This process seemingly is orchestrated by a higher force, which she referred to as a sort of nuclear atom in our psyche (p. 161). The ego, which represents the conscious attitude, plays an important role

in being open to the messages of the unconscious and in discerning how to assimilate the contents that have been made conscious (p. 163). There seems to be plenty of symbolism within and without the individual; the task seems to be helping people cultivate an openness to allowing the symbol to emotionally impact them and then reflecting about its meaning.

In his book *Transformation: Emergence of the Self* (1998), Jungian analyst Murray Stein brings Jung's theory of individuation to life through the familiar metaphor of journey from caterpillar to butterfly. He emphasizes transformation as the driving force of individuation, describing it as the death of the false self that must occur in order for the authentic Self to emerge (p. xiii). The most gruesome part of the transformative process is the complete disintegration of the caterpillar form, and Murray likens this to the dark night of the soul that seems to prompt similarly dramatic changes in a human being's essence or outlook on life. I have heard many people ask spiritual teachers whether crisis is required for one to become enlightened, and Murray suggests that crisis or a dark night of the soul represents the death that is needed in order for there to be transformation (p. 13). This death and rebirth phase can be terrifying, possibly dangerous, and not for everyone, and I think his analysis of the lives of Jung, Picasso, and Rilke illustrate how powerful the urge to individuate must be in order to compel those on that path with the courage to pursue it no matter the costs (p. 78). The film *The Matrix* (Wachowski, & Wachowski, 1999) comes to mind, specifically the scene where Neo must choose between a world that he senses is false and taking the pill that will take him to an unknown place. Whereas the caterpillar does not get a choice in the matter, the human being does when it comes to how to respond to the crisis or calling of the Self. In

my own example, the calling I received caused a deep conflict within me, because I knew answering it required me to stand up in a way that would cause all sorts of problems in my life.

Like von Franz (1964), Stein (1998) suggests that it is a transformational image that initiates the individuation process, stirring up and directing psychic energy into specific areas. This calls to mind the image I believe is responsible for the beginning of my own individuation journey—the logo for the Pacifica Graduate Institute M.A./Ph.D. program in Depth Psychology that I saw in the back of a magazine. The logo image eludes me now, and my desperate attempts to find it have been unsuccessful; however, as I try to re-experience the feeling the words *depth psychology* appear, along with a blending of orange and red color. I remember gasping and feeling that those words represented some kind of secret, because I had no idea what they meant. Even after investigating and reading every page of the website, I remember thinking *I have no idea what this is, but I have to have it.* All I knew is that I had heard of Carl Jung. I had a sense that my life had just changed course, and I felt compelled to take a series of actions over the next three years that ultimately led to much suffering and many changes in my life as well as my work on a topic I never would have imagined choosing. In thinking about Jung's suggestion that conventional religious images seem to be fading in their capacity to provide the kind of guidance that human beings need, it is important for people to be open to their own potential source of transformative images, one of those being dreams and to have tools to explore them. Murray makes the distinction that transformative dream images are archetypal and “capture the element of wholeness in an individual’s life and give it specific shape and direction” (p 63). The growing

deconstruction of all kinds of traditional frameworks for values and systems of living seem to reflect a collective phase of some kind of death. Like the dying caterpillar we have no idea what will emerge, but like Neo we have choice when it comes to deepening into the process and reflecting upon it, even believing that our personal experience will contribute to the collective formation of something new (p. xxi).

The final piece from Murray's book that is relevant for the proposed study is the notion of relationship being both an initiator and container for transformation. Whereas there has been much thought given to what is happening within the patient/analyst relationship, the author notes that other relationships have not been consciously studied in this regard. For example, whereas initially it was thought that the analyst was an objective observer and interpreter, Jung came to see that the analyst's own unconscious played a role and that progress was dependent upon both parties being influenced by the relationship (p. 79). Murray describes in dramatic language the phases through which a patient/analyst relationship proceeds, and even though he concedes that other relationships can result in transformation, it feels as though he romanticizes the analyst/patient relationship and places it above others. It is true that the analyst may have expertise and awareness that a lay person lacks, and Murray lays out a high standard for other relationships to be considered transformational, for example that marriage can be transformational only if there is some kind of mysterious bond that compels the couple to stay together (p. 100). I do not disagree with the potential transformative power of the analyst or therapist/client relationship, but it feels as though there is an implication that a therapist is required in order for one to experience transformation outside the therapist's office. Empowering people with a perspective and framework to explore their own

relationships as potentially transformative could positively impact the well-being of those who do not choose or have access to therapy. Even his description of the underlying unconscious connection that makes for the basis of a potentially transformative relationship can be extended outside the therapist's office. Murray describes beautifully this kind of relationship where there is an underlying and probably unconscious connection that was present at their first encounter, which was likely to be improbable and synchronistic where there was a sense of instant recognition of each other (p. 101). If this is one of the standards for potential transformation through relationship, I do not believe it should be implied that it always exists between analyst and patient.

Jungian analyst Lionel Corbett (1996/2002) suggests that humanity is evolving in its relationship to the Divine, and in his book *The Religious Function of the Psyche*, he suggests that whereas traditional religious dogma for some time acted as a successful mediator of the God-image, today many find themselves disconnected from these traditional symbols and rituals, and instead seek a more personal relationship to the Divine. Further, in his book *Psyche and the Sacred; Spirituality Beyond Religion* (2012), Corbett suggests that one may experience a relationship to the Divine or God in the form of union that transcends oneself through the body and/or relationship (pp. 22-25). In my study, I wish to extend this notion by bringing consciousness to especially women's experience of sexuality as a path to spirituality.

Jungian analyst James Hollis in *The Eden Project* (1998) emphasizes the transcendent and religious aspect of sexuality in relationship, and he effectively grounds the experience in individuation theory. His approach does seem theoretical, and I think

there is an opportunity to bring his contribution to life through examples of lived experience.

Thomas Moore (1994) in *Soul Mates; Honoring the Mysteries of Love and Relationship*, dedicates a chapter to the notion that “sex asks something of us,” calling on the Greek god Hermes as a communicator of the message (p. 160-161). In addition, he points to the value of the dark side or wounded side of our sexual experience, which is also reflected in Bonheim’s (1997) reminder of the dark side of the Greek Goddess Aphrodite. Whereas Moore clearly emphasizes the importance of sexual experience in one’s relationship with oneself and with others, I believe this could be expanded to include more stories from women’s perspective. All of these authors support the suggestion that sexuality is connected to spirituality and provide an opening to examine the lived experience of women.

In her book, *The Way of All Women*, Harding (1933/1990) talks about the special role sexuality plays in relationship, “Sexual love is a spark of the Divine fire implanted in man through which he may find his way to heaven and be identified for the moment with the gods” (p. 202). Harding takes the position that marriage is the ideal form of relationship, because marriage as a part of a moral code forces a kind of seriousness about one’s responsibility to maintaining a relationship, as well as ensures that two adults will be available to care for children (p. 210). The institution of marriage, like other conventional moral codes, is unraveling, but it is not clear whether it is marriage as an institution that needs saving or if the breakdown reflects something new emerging from the collective unconscious. Alongside the breakdown of marriage as a powerful institution, sexual moral codes are breaking down as well, and like everything, there are

both light and dark aspects to this. Whereas today's increased openness to sexual experience is a positive compensation to repression of the natural sexual instinct especially in women, Harding pointed out that, "unless a new attitude of seriousness arises to replace the discarded code" (p. 200), sexuality becomes a trivial matter. This makes sense, for what is readily available loses its power to transform, but I do not think this is true about marriage. If Harding is correct in reminding us that sexual attraction makes it possible for a deep relationship to develop between a man and a woman, that the "sex instinct reaches deep into the roots of the psyche" (p. 296), then what seems more important than marriage is the consciousness of the two parties involved and some kind of suprapersonal value that places the development of each individual as well as the relationship above the mere physical or emotional needs of each.

Category #2—Individuation and women. Whereas it is important for both men and women to come into healthy relationship with the feminine and masculine within themselves, it is of particular importance for women, because they both individually and collectively suffer the consequences of both their gender and sense of the feminine being devalued. In fact, both what it means to be woman, feminine, and masculine have been defined by men for some time, at least since the time when patriarchy became reinforced by the emergence of Christianity. Consequently, individuation for women may particularly revolve around coming into healthy relationship with both their feminine and masculine. In her book *The Ravaged Bridegroom: Masculinity in Women* (1990), analytical psychologist Marion Woodman suggests that in order for the feminine and masculine to come into healthy relationship within the individual, patriarchy must overcome its fear of the feminine, and women must overcome their fear of the masculine

within themselves, which is being projected onto others in many cases. After centuries of oppression of the feminine and of women, the masculine has become an enemy (p. 16).

This dynamic has played out in the often angry and violent expressions by feminists as they seek to reclaim their identities as shaped by themselves instead of the other that is masculine. This fear of the masculine within women is perhaps reflected in my son's reporting of a fellow female high school student who presents as a lesbian and refers to herself as a feminist, declaring that all men are rapists. This young woman's seeming hatred for literal men could be a reflection of her discomfort with her own masculine.

Whereas Jung suggested that women generally are more in touch with their feminine, which for him equated with soul, I agree with Woodman's (1990) suggestion that patriarchy's denigration of women and the feminine is so severe, that many women have lost touch with their feminine, many having become one-sidedly masculine, reflected in her declaration that "Women can be worse patriarchs than men" (p. 18). In my own experience, I over developed my sense of the masculine as defined by Jung; I ran from the feminine, and only recently have I begun to come into relationship with my feminine in a way that is separate from my relationship with men. In the past, I valued and sought to spend more time with men because they were more interesting to me than women. On the other hand, as I adopted masculine attributes and hid feminine attributes, I dedicated my twenties to actively advocating for women's equality. Woodman (1990) describes the ultimate coming together of one's feminine and masculine as an inner marriage, which releases a great amount of creativity. As the woman comes into relationship with her own masculine, she will release her love interest from her

projections, making it possible for her to truly see the other person and be receptive to what he or she has to offer (p. 202).

Jung's starting point, in *Woman in Europe* (1927/1970), when it comes to the feminine and masculine operating within women and men is to generalize that the majority of women's traits are feminine and the majority of men's are masculine. In fact, he states that, "If one lives out the opposite sex in oneself, one is living in one's own background and one's real individuality suffers" (p. 118, para. 243). For the most part he ties feminine and masculine traits to women and men respectively. The context of Jung's position was the culture of his time and his own personal struggle with the feminine within himself. I appreciate the message that women can play a significant role in the evolution of human consciousness. In order to participate more fully in society, women have had to focus on traits that value conscious reasoning and a focus on the outer, things, and ideas, which Jung would describe as masculine. With this growing relationship with their masculine, they may seek to balance this by embracing the mysteries of the unconscious, a focus on the inner and relationships and love in order to have a balance of the two (p. 123, para 255). I think what Jung is saying is that women are particularly suited to this task, and that perhaps the development of masculine traits can make something that was an unconscious drive in them conscious, for he also says that before women acquired these masculine tasks, they were unconscious and passive (p. 116, para 240). It does not seem clear when exactly the notion of the feminine and masculine became tied to gender, nor is it likely that we have an objective understanding of the history of matriarchy and patriarchy. We can however use this as an advantage and empower many women with the knowledge that their suffering, which plays out as being

judged as immoral as they oppose conventions established by men, has a larger purpose of increasing the consciousness of humanity. I would agree with Jung that many women, in their efforts to become respected within a man's world, developing masculine traits, ended up devaluing their feminine traits in the process and have lost touch with their feminine nature. However, these traits could also be said to be feminine traits, but they were only allowed to be present and developed in men. You could say the same of men who tip in the direction of the feminine, the definition of feminine being constrained by society, that they suffer not because they are living their natural masculine in the background as Jung said, but because their feminine is valued even less because they happen to be a man (p. 117, para. 243).

Because my topic has to do with women's experience, I will focus on women. Jung suggests that once women gained masculine traits, becoming conscious of their own oppression perhaps, they found themselves in the difficult position of coming into conflict with convention, including that of marriage (Jung, 1927/1970, p. 126, para. 260). I can relate to Jung's suggestion that when one comes up against this conflict, a woman who has finally arrived in one way, now experiences anxiety and doubt because she is caught between accepted convention and the knowledge that she must challenge that convention in order to be true to herself (p. 130, para. 267). This is a lonely path. As I think about my own experience, perhaps this is where the path to God comes in, because as a woman in this situation challenges history, she must call upon something higher than herself to give her the courage to prevail (p. 130, para. 268). I like Jung's suggestion that "The woman of today is faced with a tremendous cultural task—perhaps it will be the dawn of a new era" (p. 133).

C. G. Jung admitted that his psychological theories were limited when it came to women. In fact, in the foreword to M. Esther Harding's (1933/1990) book *The Way of All Women*, Jung praises the Jungian analyst for presenting a woman's psychology that speaks of things "as they are" (p. xv) as opposed to what they should be. He goes on to suggest that women, which here he equates with the feminine and the soul, do not know themselves. Writing in the early part of the 20th Century, Harding suggests that the unconscious motivation of the feminist movement has been to "reach the goal of a more conscious relationship between the sexes" (p. 85). Whereas I do not agree with her assumption that this indirect route to improving the relationship between men and women is based on women's "relative weakness" (p. 85), it is reasonable to assume that the movement itself has not been conscious of everything it reflects as emerging from the collective unconscious. I question many of Harding's assumptions, including that "primitive woman was doubtless quite content with the role that the Genesis myth assigned to her" (p. 5), but I like her three stages of development of consciousness particularly when it comes to women, as naïve, sophisticated, and conscious. No one knows for sure what women were like leading up to patriarchy, but it is fair to suggest that during patriarchy many women have been unconscious about or devalued their own subjective experience of being a woman and of the opposites of masculine and feminine as they work for inner balance. You could say the same about men however.

Where it starts to get complicated and where there has been much controversy has to do with Jung's suggestion that the way one comes into relationship with one's less acknowledged tendency, which he assumes is the masculine within the woman and the feminine within the man, is through relationship with the opposite sex (Jung, 1927/1970,

p. 119, para. 247. Jung assumes, and maybe this was true for his time, that the part of woman that is foreign within her is the masculine and that her inner masculine, called the animus, will be projected onto a real man. While for a man, his inner feminine, called the anima, will be projected onto a real woman. Whereas it makes sense that coming into relationship with an unfamiliar part of oneself is initially experienced in projection onto another person, I do not agree that this other person, if a man, is necessarily tied to the masculine or the animus. In my own experience of projection onto a younger man, I seem to be coming into deeper relationship with my feminine through a relationship with a man who perhaps has a better relationship with his feminine than I do.

Harding (1933/1990) further develops Jung's theory of anima and animus as it relates to women's psychological development. Men who are not in touch with their unconscious or soul, which is the domain of the feminine, seek to do so through their projection of their anima onto a woman, resulting in an idealized and not realistic picture of the woman. Only by taking back this projection and developing his own feminine can a man truly know the woman who is the object of his desire. Since what a man is projecting onto the woman is an idealized version, once he takes this back, he can see and appreciate her for who she really is. Since no woman is able to live up to an ideal, when she fails it is devastating for a man. But if he knows her for who she is in actuality, he can appreciate her strengths and make room for her flaws. Harding suggests that woman's role is important in this regard, for it is only through projection initially that the man can come into relationship with his own feminine soul (p. 9). I do agree though that a woman's own consciousness about her potential role as anima is an important part of her development. I take this to mean that a man's projection of his soul onto a woman may

grant her an illusion of power over men. The woman's development requires her to transcend the conscious ego desire to manipulate this power and instead to become motivated by a value that is beyond personal satisfaction. Resisting the temptation to play into man's projection leads to her becoming a distinct personality according to Harding, and she accomplishes this by coming into deeper relationship with her own feminine (p. 29).

I disagree with Harding's (1933/1990) suggestion that women acted like men when they began entering the male-dominated world of work because they made a choice to discard their own feminine values and simply wanted to be valued for their newly developed "masculine" skills. Some women may have felt liberated to discard feminine values like relationship and compromise for example, which constrained them, but I would suggest most women did not necessarily make a conscious choice. Rather, men overall seemed determined to put up every obstacle possible to women coming into their domain and consequently required women to prove they were like men, then criticized them for being too much like men, and at the same time ridiculed any show of feminine values. I personally witnessed this dynamic as I came of professional age in the 1980s, and I think Harding is right when she suggests that the focus on equality perhaps created a dynamic that contributed to many women being over identified with their animus and unknowingly joining men in the denigration of their feminine nature, which further distanced men from their own feminine nature. Whereas Jung and Harding tend to assume men naturally exhibit more of the masculine and women naturally exhibit more of the feminine, I believe this is limiting and not the actual experience of many women today. Again, because both the masculine and feminine have both been defined by men

for so long, for me it is unclear what is naturally feminine and masculine and what are typical traits of women and men. I do agree that there continues to be an evolution of relationship between the masculine and feminine that is playing out not only within individuals, but is also reflected in compensating movements that value feminine qualities. These movements include alternative forms of spirituality, a growing appreciation for right-brained and introverted people, and a focus on social and emotional learning in the education system. I would say these movements reflect a more balanced use of human values versus feminine or masculine values. In the quest to take back feminine values, opportunities are sometimes swallowed up by conversations that focus on whether something is specifically feminine or masculine or reflecting a woman's perspective or man's perspective. What is most clear from Harding's work is that relationship with others is how men and women come to know themselves as separate individuals, the process beginning with becoming conscious of projections onto and from others (p. 34). It may turn out that a contra-sexual relationship is not critical to how one comes into relationship with the Other in oneself, and it is not clear whether the male sex is needed to come into relationship with the masculine.

In *The Woman in the Mirror; Analytical Psychology and the Feminine* (1990/2000), Jungian analyst Claire Douglas speaks to Jung's theories about the feminine and women. She reminds us that these theories, which today feel so limiting and which were formed within the context of a particular time in history, also contain a key to liberating both the feminine and women from the loosening version of patriarchy that exists today (p. x). As a feminist, I appreciate the author's plea to resist the temptation to compensate for the oppression of women and the repression of the feminine through

further separation and instead empower especially women to come into relationship with both the feminine and masculine within themselves (p. xi). The sense that one purpose of Jung's psychology was a working out of his own relationship with the Other within, which he called personality No. 2 and was reflected in his experience of his personal mother, this Other becoming what the feminine represented for him, provides a useful lens through which to view his theory as incomplete as it is (p. 36). In contrast to a fear, hatred, and violence towards the Other or supposed mysterious nature of women and the feminine, I appreciate Jung's response to the Other playing out as curiosity. His openness to exploring the Other within himself, which he took to be the feminine, brings to life his theory of the universal law of energy, a belief that valuing and integrating this Other was required in order to achieve wholeness. I do not believe Jung was a misogynist, which is defined as someone who has a hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women or girls. Rather, Jung's theories about women and the feminine, as flawed as they seem to us today, represented an important shift towards valuing women and the feminine. This is supported by the fact that women played a significant role in his life as patients, colleagues, and future analysts, who without his work might not have found their own voice as intelligent contributors to analytical psychology (p. 36).

Douglas (1990/2000) provides a comprehensive overview of those who extended, expanded, and challenged Jung's original theory perhaps reflecting Jung's suggestion that archetypes are only knowable in how they manifest and these manifestations change as culture changes (p. 151). As women's voices, and the voices of men who have a healthy relationship with their own feminine, become a more distinct part of the conversation when it comes to women's psychological development, the archetypes of feminine and

masculine will likely manifest in a new way. Douglas points out that the main difficulty in expanding Jung's theories as they relate to women is that he never really wrote about women in a focused way, rather what he has to say about women's psychology and the feminine is scattered throughout his writings (p. x). The theme that one finds though is a continued unfortunate and perhaps unavoidable tying of masculine traits to the male gender. Perhaps his most limiting statement is tying the concept of Logos—which he defines as the ability to discriminate, make judgments, gain insight, use the intellect, take action and use reason—as masculine and then attributes these traits to the male gender. This is strongly reflected in his statement “It is probably Logos and Eros, impersonal and personal, which are the most fundamental differences between man and woman” (p. 58). That statement that man is the sex that naturally thinks and woman the sex that naturally relates and is passive is striking and today offensive.

Douglas's (1990/2000) overview illuminates what could be seen as an evolution in Jungian thought when it comes to both the notion of the feminine and the psychological experience of individuation of women. She points out that there is danger in theorists and writers of today not appreciating this history and evolution, especially as offered by women themselves (p. 107). Early women Jungians seemed to take an important step in compensating for Jung's negativity when it came to the role of the animus but they stayed true to Jung's stereotypes. For example, Toni Wolff, who was a patient of Jung's, as well as his mistress and colleague, and became an analyst herself, suggested that healthy women are those who excel in feeling, relatedness and develop through their relationship with men, implying that women do not have a role in life separate from being in relationship with men (p. 114). Jolande Jacobi went further and

suggested that women who show initiative negatively impact their male children (p. 116). Renee Brand's work is labeled by Douglas as the only autobiographical Jungian work by a woman analyst and is valuable because it presents one woman's lived experience that happens to conform to Jung's theory (p. 119). Douglas points out that the conformity of Brand's lived experience to Jung's theory could potentially be explained by the possibility that she was a *feeling type*, and she laments that her work unfortunately is presented as a model for women's experience instead of being offered as just one type of experience. The impact of presenting as typical or normal one person's lived experience is the potential for analysts to lead their patients to conform to something that is not reflective of their lived experience, leading to the further potential internalizing by women that their natural lived experience is abnormal (p. 15). Barbara Hannah also stayed true to Jung's stereotyped views of the feminine and like Jacobi suggested that it was necessary for women to actually cultivate the traits of being passive, receptive, and related, and that by participating in the man's world of business, she was in danger of harming her feminine nature (p. 120). Finally, Marie Louise von Franz, who Douglas referred to as one of the last of the second-generation Jungians and his closest intellectual peer and collaborator in alchemical studies, also stays true to Jung's stereotyped view of the feminine and his tendency to equate the feminine with women.

I agree with Douglas's insight that at the same time von Franz presents herself as a strong intellect, she is suggesting that a strong intellect in a woman is not only not natural but also possibly harmful to women's psychological development. As Douglas points out, these second-generation Jungian women were also constrained by the limitations imposed by the culture of the time. Personally, I feel only respect and

admiration for these women who through Jung's theories were able to break out of the restrictions of the time as much as they could. They were able to develop their own intellects, even if they did not recognize their own innate and natural capacity to be intellectual. They paved the way for the next generation of Jungian thinkers. Also considered conservators by Douglas, I would say some of these thinkers began to recognize and support women's breaking out of society's restrictions on them but stayed with Jung's notion that women are essentially the carriers of Eros or the capacity to relate. Instead of denigrating women for developing masculine traits though, they point to the problem as the repression and hatred of the feminine both within individuals and in society (Douglas, 1990/2000, pp. 123-125). The thread here is the plea to bring back what was seen as the feminine generally versus constraining women to being the sole carriers of the feminine, and in fact, this shift seems evident in June Singer's suggestion that the feminine is both active and passive (p. 125).

Digging into the history of Jung's and early Jungians' theories about the feminine and women was painful but also exciting for it served as the foundation for a new era of thinkers who Douglas (1990/2000) referred to as reformulators. What was painful was revisiting how intensely limiting both women's and men's views were of women's capacity and the lack of imagination to envision women as full and valuable contributors to society. That feeling was familiar and brought me back to a book I read in high school titled *Looking Backward*, written by Edward Bellamy (1888/1960). A utopian science fiction story, it is the third-largest bestseller of its time and in its foreword, psychoanalyst and author Erich Fromm remarked that the book was the first to immediately spark a movement (p. vi). I remember at the time being inspired by everything about the book

except its incapacity to imagine a world where women were not constrained by ideas about their role. We can imagine space travel, alien life, and technology that can do things never before imagined, but yet to imagine women as equally valuable in every respect was not possible.

Of course progress on this front is reflected in the next phase of thinking about Jung's theory, namely a new consciousness that women are individuals and not simply opposites, extensions, or complements of men, and that they have their own thoughts about who they are. Unlike Harding (1933/1990) who saw the women's movement as having an unconscious goal of resolving relations between men and women, Beatrice Hinkle saw feminism as reflecting a collective drive toward individuation, the outcome of which would be a new idea of what it means to be a woman as an individual and not as she exists in relation to man (Douglas, 1990/2000, p. 129). I think it is a significant insight on Douglas's part, because it is reflective of what I think my own nature to be, to note that Hinkle was strong in both traditionally masculine and feminine traits. Up until this time, women Jungians who were strongly intellectual (considered a masculine trait) understandably gave the credit over to Jung as reflecting their animus or other Jungians (men and women) even suggesting that women were putting their feminine nature at risk by developing their intellectual capacity. Jung offered conflicting statements about his psychological types theory, specifically that the types were not tied to gender, but then he went on to say that women were primarily feeling types and men primarily thinking types. Jungian theorist Hilde Binswanger extends Jung's former view as well as attributes the overall confusion about the feminine and the tendency to equate the feminine with real women as due to men's unconscious projection (p. 130). Irene Claremont de

Castillejo's (1973/1997) book, *Knowing Woman*, is considered by Douglas to be one of the best books on Jungian feminine psychology, and while she is conservative in assigning feeling, relatedness, and Eros to women, she suggests that women are not the opposite of men and that there just has not been enough exploration to be able to say what a woman's psyche actually is (Douglas, 1990/2000, p. 130).

One of the themes that emerged from considering the work of the reformulators is a postmodern attempt to pull apart categories and labels. Jane Wheelwright suggests that Jung's principle of opposites may not be relevant when it comes to defining male and female as she sees the unconscious in both men and women having feminine and masculine aspects (Douglas, 1990/2000, p. 134). Ann Ulanov suggests the need for an exploration of the meaning of the feminine, and James Hillman suggests that the feminine has simply been everything that man had difficulty accepting or reconciling, projecting it onto the ultimate other of woman (p. 135). In addition to Hillman, reformulators like Garth Hill, Judith Hubback, E. C. Whitmont, Bradway, and others are critical of Jungians who continue to attribute Logos/thinking/animus/consciousness and what are considered their opposites to gender seeing this as harmful to the development of women and men (pp. 136-141). Andrew Samuels concurs suggesting that freeing men and women from stereotypes contributes to healing, psychological growth, and the opportunity to achieve one's potential (p. 145).

Douglas's (1990/2000) summary of what has shifted in Jungian thinking on this topic is helpful and comforting for me in its confirmation of an overall move away from seeing women only in relation to men, from seeing women as the carriers of everything that patriarchy sees as unacceptable and weak, and an acknowledgment that we do not

really know what is naturally feminine or masculine (p. 148). Both an explanation and a solution could be the study of women's lived experience, which is needed to even develop a comprehensive theory of women's psychological development. I am particularly curious about further development of theory regarding the presence of the contrasexual within and how to differentiate between masculine and feminine and men and women's psychology, because, so far, my understanding of my lived experience does not seem to fit nicely into anyone's theory.

Jung saw myths as a reflection of the attempted collective understanding of the powerful archetypal energies driving human experience (Jung, 1963/1989, p. 162). The Greek and Roman gods and goddesses could be seen to personify the interplay between the mysterious inner drives and outer events that were not explainable. Sacrifice to the gods and goddesses represented humility and respect for these powerful drives. These great myths and stories reflect both something eternal in the form of archetypes but also are specific manifestations of the archetypes. The trick is to find the themes that are archetypal while adapting the myth in a way that expresses the new manifestation of the archetype that reflects the current collective image (Johnson, 1986/1989, p. x). In Robert Johnson's attempt to relate the Psyche and Eros story to the individuation of the feminine, he suggests the story represents the development of the feminine part of the personality from innocence to maturity as the mortal Psyche wrestles with the opposing force of the god of love in Eros. On the other hand, the author I believe falls into the trap of projecting onto women as a gender the responsibility for men's development of their consciousness (p. 13). I suppose relating Psyche's marriage to death to modern women's experience of marriage as a kind of death might be accurate in our patriarchal society, but

I think this portrayal seems to be caught in a stereotype, and I believe there is something deeper in women's experience of individuation that could be said to be presented in the myth. Further the author suggests that a woman needs to remain "centered in her feminine identity" and vice versa for a man (p. 60). This does not seem to make room for a more fluid notion of gender where a woman or a man may have a balance of the feminine and masculine but tip more masculine in the case of the woman and more feminine in the case of the man consistently or during certain phases of life. Further, there are those who do not identify as either man or woman, and I believe these people may play the role of helping us liberate the feminine and masculine from biology. If Psyche represents the soul or unconscious and we agree with Jung that every individual has both a feminine and a masculine, then it is not useful to assume that women as a gender are more in touch with their unconscious, even though that may be the case sometimes, and that it falls on them to raise the consciousness of men, even though it may play out that way sometimes.

Archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1985/2007) in *Anima: An anatomy of a personified notion* challenges the trap Jung may have found himself in as he developed his concept of the anima. Hillman lays a foundation for releasing Jung's anima from the grip of one particular manifestation of the archetypal feminine during one particular time period of history. In *The Myth of Analysis* (1960/1999) he suggests that "Jung saw that instinct has an imaginal aspect, a mythic factor, and that therefore the sexual is also an activity of the imagination, a psychological expression; the sexual is a way the soul speaks" (p. 141).

If inherent in the split between sexuality and religion is a split between body and mind, it is important to consider that healing may require embracing the body, and some have pointed to the lack of work in this area. In this quote by Lyn Cowan (2002) from her book *Tracking the White Rabbit*, she suggests that Jungian psychology has unconsciously prioritized “interpreting the sexual as symbolic . . . losing touch with the instincts” (Santana, 2017, p. 63). She associates this tendency with Christianity’s prioritizing spirit over instincts. For my topic it is important to consider the role the body plays, that it may hold wisdom and wounds that cannot be accessed through an intellectual approach to looking at one’s sexual experience. Movement therapist Daria Halprin (2003) suggests that for real transformation to take place, the body must be considered (p. 210). Extending Halprin’s somatic approach specifically to consider relational and sexual experiences could contribute to women’s capacity to gain insights that are not available via the intellect. A leader in the study of movement and dance, Sondra Fraleigh (2015), emphasizes the importance of the body in complementing the mind, suggesting that the body is another way of articulating what the mind knows (p. 2). Personally, I gained insights through bodywork that led to the feeling of wholeness that might not have been possible through the mind, and the work of Fraleigh and others could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of women’s experience of sexuality as a path to spirituality.

Category #3—Film as a reflection of new manifestations of the archetypes of the feminine, sexuality, and religion emerging from the collective unconscious. The growing interest in looking at film through a Jungian and post-Jungian lens may reflect a growing desire to engage with the unconscious. The expansion of Jung’s work into film

theory offers an opportunity to examine how film not only impacts an individual's psychological development but also how a significant collective response to certain films may reflect an unconscious desire to compensate for some kind of one-sidedness related to expressing a human drive or instinct.

As I began unraveling my personal complexes, I found myself intensely drawn into certain films and gained insights that I suspect might not have occurred in the office of my therapist. Further, as I integrated these new insights, I found myself being preoccupied by the potential to find further meaning in certain films that transcended my personal experience. It was as though the image continued to work in me, and only after acquiescing to my psyche's demand to view certain films as many as six times could I finally gain an insight that allowed me to relate my personal experience to something happening in the collective.

In *Visible Mind: Movies, Modernity and the Unconscious* (2014), Jungian analyst and filmmaker Christopher Hauke suggests that the cinema can act as temenos, a kind of sacred space where one's unconscious gets stirred up (p. 4). I suggest there is something about the experience of engaging with a film in a dark womb-like space, offering both privacy and connection to the collective that makes it possible to consciously experience a film's impact on one's unconscious that is very different from what may occur in therapy. Some dismiss the notion that patients' experience with film may be valuable material to work with in therapy, but Hauke suggests that film images may stir the unconscious just as dreams can, although the key seems to be one's attitude when it comes to exploring the image (p. 157). Hauke encourages the inclusion of film experience in the therapeutic office, and I would go a step further and suggest that depth

psychology could contribute to even more healing by offering guidance and tools for individuals to work with their film experience on their own, much like Robert Johnson (1986/1989) did with dream work. Hauke's (2014) observation of the invention of film coinciding with the development of depth psychology is interesting, and I suspect that even the average moviegoer may be conscious that film often prompts needed self-reflection on an individual and collective level (p. 7). On the other hand, film also provides a convenient escape for many from taking responsibility to reflect, and this is one of the criticisms of using film experience as therapeutic material (p. 161). Hauke covers two additional Jungian concepts as it relates to film, and both of these are relevant to my topic: individuation and anima. Before he highlights several movies that reflect a process of individuation, the author effectively educates the reader about how our experience of the Other has become tied to the feminine and assigned to the female Other being the unconscious and anima or the feminine being the bridge to the unconscious (p. 174).

In many films where you can see an individuation process unfolding, it is often the entanglement with a female character that brings about a new life-changing awareness on the part of the male and this matches up with Jung's theory of anima. I wonder though if anima, as symbolized by female, is the one who bridges the unconscious for men, who plays this role for women, especially those who have become quite adept in relating to their masculine at the expense of their feminine? In the film *Wonder Woman* (Roven, Snyder, Snyder & Suckle, 2017), for example, the female superhero reflects a stronger masculine than feminine and she has a very naïve and simplistic belief that good can overcome evil. She individuates with the help of Steve Trevor, played by Chris Pine, who

seems to reflect a more feminine than masculine approach in his capacity to hold paradox for example. It is difficult to tie the change that occurs in both of their attitudes to feminine or masculine or anima or animus. A more nuanced balance of feminine and masculine also appears in the two evil characters, the female Dr. Poison and the male character Ludendorff. In this film, it becomes difficult to tie characteristics to gender, and instead one is left with having to sort through human traits.

Finally, when Hauke (2014) considers some other films, he asks the question about whether it is the feminine or love, which initiates the change in the characters who are individuating, and suggests that love can be seen as the Other to reason, and he encourages us to correct what I would describe as a stubborn attachment to using the feminine and masculine as tied to female and male as the primary method of overcoming our one-sided rational approach to life (p. 184). Love as the initiator of individuation seems to appear in the *Wonder Woman* (Roven, Snyder, Snyder & Suckle, 2017) film. I find Hauke's suggestion about this exciting and a hopeful way of ending his book.

Jung did not have much to say about film in his writings, but Research Professor of Media Analysis and Jungian analyst Luke Hockley (2005) suggests that Jung saw the new medium of film with its focus on the visual image as a way to relate to the ancient myths, stories which illustrated the human struggle to manage powerful and primordial instincts, in modern times (p. 43). Hockley saw Jung's theories as useful in exploring the meaning of film from both an individual and collective perspective, extending the theories of transference and countertransference, which reflect the complex dialogue between the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyches of patient and client, into the experience of watching film (p. 41). Perhaps curious about the prevalence of the desire on

the part of patients to talk about film in therapy, Hockley (2014) developed a language that can contribute to understanding the dynamics that lead to the psychological impact films sometimes have on people. In addition to contributing to film theory and providing therapists with a framework in which to discuss film with their patients, I believe that his theory could be adapted for a general population of film viewers who are especially moved by film and already have a propensity to reflect on their own experiences.

The way Hockley (2014) describes his theory of the third image as the space between the viewer and the film screen where the intended meaning of the film is overtaken by unexpected emotional responses perfectly captures my own experience with many films that continue to contribute powerfully to my individuation process (p. 9). His use of liminal space to describe the sense of feeling partially awake and partially in a dream world effectively describes the sense of the loosening of consciousness that is required to reflect deeply on how we experience being in the world (p. 154).

The first film where I felt completely and dramatically swept up into experiencing it in a way that I was quite sure was not intended by the film maker was one that found me on Netflix. Instead of experiencing *In Your Eyes* (Hill, 2014) as the paranormal romance in which it was promoted, I experienced the man and woman main characters as part of one psyche. The somatic experience was so intense that even after I reflected on its personal meaning, I continued to be preoccupied by what felt like an inner prompting to find more meaning. Ultimately, the dynamic I discovered in the film led me to see the same dynamic having to do with an evolving balance of the masculine and feminine in other blockbuster films and in certain cultural trends. At any other time, this film might not have had this kind of impact on me, as reflected in Hockley's (2014) suggestion that

the meaning of film for an individual is dependent on the interplay between our evolving conscious awareness, our personal unconscious and its relationship with the collective unconscious, and the film at a particular moment (p. 152). Once one integrates a new insight gained from a film, the film may lose its pull on us or may open us up to new insights. I am intrigued by Hockley's pointing out the presence and importance of the rituals that accompany the film viewing experience, especially those that go beyond the collective rituals of purchasing tickets and sitting together in a dark theatre (p. 150). For example, whereas I used to think that my obsession with going to movies over the past two years had to do with a need to get a respite from thinking all day, I realize that there is deeper meaning in my rituals, which include walking eight blocks to and from the local dinner theatre, needing to sit at a certain table, ordering two cosmos, enjoying the familiarity with which the servers treat me, and the joy I feel on my walk back home in the dark when perhaps my body needs to process what I have seen. This ritual is so strong that no matter the movies being shown, I will keep to my weekly schedule of attending this particular theatre twice per week. Luckily, the theatre's focus on superhero themed movies seems to be a genre that particularly activates my unconscious these days. There seems to be a significant opportunity to empower more people with a framework with which to reflect upon the meaning certain films may have for their lives.

Hauke (2014) suggests that it is not typically films that are intended to be psychological that tend to show up in therapy, rather it is the more mainstream and popular films that seem to have the most meaning for patients (p. 4). In *Archetypal Perspective and American Film*, professor Glen Slater (2005) suggests that what makes film powerful is its ability to achieve archetypal resonance, which he describes as a film's

capacity to communicate something behind the literal text that connects to a deep universal human need through visual metaphors and that also includes a visit to the shadow side of society (p. 6).

In *Jungian Film Studies: The Essential Guide* (Bassil-Morozow & Hockley, 2017), the authors outline the evolution of Jungian film theory within and alongside the more established film theories based on the theories of psychoanalysis developed by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. I appreciate this context as well as the author's suggestion that Jungian theory and its more established counterpart are not mutually exclusive, rather Jungian theory offers a fresh perspective for how to explore the meaning of film narratives and our experiences of them (p. 20). He describes Jungian theory as focusing not as much on finding a stable meaning, but appreciating the fluidity of a film's meaning, which is tied to a specific moment in time in which the viewer is experiencing the film. Films that at one time had significant impact on me later no longer produce the same effect, because I have integrated the new insight that emerged from my conscious working with the symbols that represented something I could not articulate at that time. I like the way the authors suggest that symbolic images exist in the space between the unconscious and conscious, and that the viewer's consciousness helps facilitate the process of working with his unconscious to shape the symbol's meaning within a larger narrative (p. 56). This effectively describes my personal experience with film as well as the author's portrayal of archetypal psychologist James Hillman's (1976/1992) suggestion that what is most beneficial for psychological development is to resist the need to find a specific meaning and instead prolong the experience of the image, this of course being a significant challenge in a world that seems obsessed with control (p. 39).

I appreciate Hillman's sentiment though as I reflect on the tension I felt between seeking the meaning behind my preoccupation with a certain film and my simply being intrigued with and curious about the intense effect the film *In Your Eyes* (Hill, 2014) produced in me over a three-week period. I knew the film was working on me and perhaps intuitively I knew that was the point. I also appreciate Bassil-Morozow and Hockley's (2017) warning of potential pitfalls when it comes to applying Jungian film concepts in a reductive way, for example by simply identifying archetypes or archetypal processes such as the hero's journey (p. 7). The book's description of alien-themed films as reflecting modern humans' anxieties about technology is an example of this temptation to limit a film's meaning. Of the films that have had a significant impact on me, *Alien* (Carroll, Giler, & Hill, 1979) without exception is number one on the list, but for me the effect that continues to be evoked in me has to do with the evolving role of women and balance between the feminine and masculine and little to do with the actual alien as representing the anxiety around technology or the intended narrative (p. 45).

Finally, the book does spend some time on the topic of women and ends up asking questions regarding how narratives related to women's experience of individuation relate to the archetypal hero's journey and how this is presented in film. The presentations of women's individuation journeys are evolving in film, the narratives presenting the possibility that women's journeys are not dependent upon nor tied to their relationship with men. A good example of this is the difference in the Lara Croft protagonist character as presented in the first two *Raider* movies (Gordon, Levin, & Wilson, 2001; Gordon, L. & Levin, L., 2003), versus the most recent prequel version, which had a new director and actor (King, G., 2018). In all three of the movies, the female protagonist participates in a

hero's journey. In the first two movies, this character, played by Angelina Jolie, is presented as an anima figure, as reflected by her idealized physical form and projections from men. Her character is on a somewhat noble quest, motivated in part by her relationship with her father who passed away. The men in the film do not seem to grow and neither does she. It comes across for me as a pure adventure movie that calls upon fantasy images of women, although she does seem to capture a combination of sexuality and strength. In the third movie, which is the prequel to the first two, the younger version of the female protagonist is also on a hero's journey played out in the search for her father. Her journey requires her to develop a relationship with her animus and in the process her anima seems to mature as well. Love for her father and the capacity to let him go seem to be the instigator of her transformation. There is little focus on her sexuality and she does not come across as a fantasy figure but rather a young woman who develops a sense of strength, independence, and commitment to honoring her father's secret and honorable work. The first two movies did not receive particularly good reviews and the third one was more successful but received mixed reviews that may reflect the current state of confusion about what exactly women's individuation looks like (p. 159). This text offers a great context in which to explore how my lived experience may be showing up in the larger culture in the form of film.

Coming into relationship with the archetypal masculine and feminine seems to be one of the most important components of the individuation process, and if Jungian analyst John Beebe (2008/2009) is correct in suggesting that films may offer a view of the feminine that is outside of women's actual experience and men's projections, a film that has an unexpected and powerful emotional effect on an individual or a group could

be a reflection of something new emerging from the unconscious when it has to do with the archetypal feminine (xviii). As I have already suggested and as Virginia Apperson, co-author with John Beebe of *The Presence of the Feminine in Film* suggests, the archetypal feminine “does not just belong to women” (p. 3). I appreciate Beebe’s openness to exploring how the male and female characters in his own dreams were reflecting the masculine and feminine, implying that he was considering that a male character could be reflecting the feminine, a woman the masculine, or a single man or woman representing a combination of both feminine and masculine. From the moment I was introduced to Jung’s concept of anima and animus, I felt that they did not neatly capture my personal experience. Whereas Apperson offers descriptors of the feminine that seem in alignment with other Jungians, such as related to nature, instincts, cycle of life, death, and rebirth, I like her description of the feminine as spontaneous, ambiguous, and unpredictable, the opposite of the masculine need for clarity, purpose, and simple solutions. The co-author sums up her sense of the feminine as being able to embody opposite qualities, for example, intensely emotional and related and also intensely detached and ruthless, and that this of course frustrates the masculine (pp. 5-14).

Apperson’s (2008/2009) analysis of the 1991 film *Silence of the Lambs* (Demme), which is considered one of the most influential films of all time and is preserved in the National Film Registry for being culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant, articulates a view of the feminine that seems to have been newly emerging out of the collective unconscious. In the film, Clarice, the female protagonist FBI agent solves a case that the other male FBI agents before her have not been able to solve. Apperson suggests that whereas the viewer wants to root for her to prove that she can solve the case

by fitting into the masculine world, the viewer is taken on a journey where they become more comfortable with the idea that it is Clarice's trust of a feminine approach and her unique experience as a woman that will in the end solve the case. Apperson's analysis puts words to something that has been felt especially by women who have been trying to escape the constraints of an imposed definition of what it means to be feminine and masculine. The authors' work supports my sense that my reactions to certain films may not only reflect something relevant to my personal psychology regarding how my experience of sexuality has informed my spirituality, but in particular how the films that have been blockbuster hits may reflect something collective as well.

Hillman (1976/1992), in his book *Re-Visioning Psychology* offers an archetypal framework for coming into relationship with all the characters within one's psyche, a framework that values the disintegration and regression that necessarily precludes soul-making (p. 27). Whereas he calls on the Greek myths to help personify our symptoms and dream characters, I suggest that this framework can be useful in coming into relationship with these characters via film images that perhaps indirectly connect us to a particular Greek god or goddess. Further, as Hillman suggests, "religions always provide containers for psychopathology" (p. 95), I wonder if the public's insatiable appetite for superhero movies is a reflection of Hillman's concepts at work. The superhero characters in these movies can be seen to both bring to life characteristics of specific gods and goddesses and typically their source of power lies in their psychopathology. As I consider my own obsession with these movies, I now see the possible connection between my obsession and my previously unconscious search for a new God-image. I like Hillman's encouraging us to see our disturbances as forces that feel like gods and goddesses that we

cannot control and that want something from us, and that while these gods plague many, our relating to them results in a uniquely individual manifestation of their influence (p. 105).

Summary

Based on the texts I have reviewed to this point, the topic of women's experience of sexuality and spirituality considered together through the lens of Jungian individuation theory seems firmly grounded in the field of depth psychology. Further, the work done by Jungians that have expanded theories related to women's psychology and women's experience of individuation offer the opportunity to confirm or further expand these theories based on the lived experience of the researcher. The comprehensive overview of this development of Jung's theories as it relates to women presented by Claire Douglas (1990/2000) in *The Passion of Unlived Life: The Animus and Anima—Part One*, is particularly relevant and an exciting context within which to relate this researcher's work. One important part of this research is contending with limiting notions of what it means to be a woman as well as peeling the notion of the feminine away from literal women. Unpacking this I suspect will impact my capacity to explore the relationship between sexuality and spirituality as it relates to women's experience of individuation. Finally, Jungian film theory offers the researcher a lens through which to consider one's personal psychology as well as to relate the personal to the collective.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Procedures

Theoretical Research Approach

The proposed study will be conducted with a depth psychological hermeneutical approach to examine how Jungian and post-Jungian ideas about individuation, sexuality, and spirituality may assist in exploring the unconscious forces that run through women's experience of sexuality and how it may inform one's path to spirituality. This approach will also be employed to examine the lived experience of the researcher within the context of the larger culture as reflected in film narratives and individual and collective reactions to certain films. Consequently, there will be three types of texts that will be examined, texts related to depth psychological concepts; the researcher's lived experience; and film.

Hermeneutics as the art of interpretation for the purpose of understanding goes beyond information to integrate knowledge in a meaningful way by placing it within a larger context. Adding the lens of depth psychology includes being aware of how the unconscious is impacting the entire process of both understanding (what I am learning) and attempts to be understood (how I articulate and share) (Zimmerman, 2015, p. 54). Whereas the hermeneutic circle describes the mainly unconscious process of the reader relating what is new to what is already familiar and then placing this within a larger context of text, culture, or history, a depth psychological perspective to hermeneutics would consider how the reader's personal complexes and the powerful archetypal forces behind them inform this process (p. 47). Whereas a depth psychological perspective to research suggests it is impossible to fully separate the object of research from the subject

doing the research, this approach also suggests some level of objectivity in the research can be achieved through the conscious attention to and the revealing of these forces and prejudices.

In fact, Jungian analyst and author Robert Romanyshyn (2013), suggests that in order for one's research to attend to the soul of the work and to be in service to others instead of becoming simply a personal confession of the researcher, the process must begin with an awareness by the researcher that her passion for the topic is rooted in psychological wounds that act as an initial entry point for the work (p. 112). The hermeneutic circle from a depth psychological perspective considers not just what I think the text is saying and how I think this contributes to my next question, but also how my unconscious impacts the process. Depth psychology is an approach to understanding the human experience, and this approach values the unconscious as a source of knowledge and understanding (Coppin & Nelson, 2005/2017, p. 100). I thought the reason I wanted to write a paper about what I referred to as the *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomenon was curiosity about the range of responses to the books and movie. With a depth perspective, I knew and was open to learning the deeper meaning behind my fascination with what I termed *phenomenon*, and I came to learn that this prompting was just the beginning of a journey that was to unfold in its own way. The subsequent moments of deepening into the topic through my unconscious relationship with it came only as a result of intentionally relating to my unconscious. But there was a deeper meaning behind my curiosity that I came to know only through working with dreams, synchronicity, and exploring my reactions to certain films, all methods of working with the unconscious that are valid with a depth psychological approach (p. 259).

What I am interpreting includes depth psychological texts that might have something to say about sexual experience as part of individuation and one's relationship to God, and what real women's sexual experiences as shared in words and images, including my own, reveal about their relationship to God. In Zimmerman's (2015) book *Hermeneutics; A Very Short Introduction*, the author reminds us that understanding is partially an art that includes a unique and personal interpretation of an event, which results in an understanding of the event within a larger context of personal experience (p. 2). As I review texts related to the topic of sexuality and God, my interpretation will be part analysis as I gather facts and part art as I relate them to a larger whole, the meaning of which reflects how the facts relate to my lived experience.

Insight may be gained by interpreting written texts that have something to say about Jung's theory of individuation as it relates to sexuality, the feminine, and spirituality. A different kind of insight may emerge from interpreting another kind of text, the phenomena of lived experience, in this case that of the researcher. Wilhelm Dilthey, who contributed to the development of hermeneutics and phenomenology, suggested scientific methods that relied on explanations based on cause and effect and general laws were incomplete, and another approach was needed in order to understand the "fullness of phenomena" (Coppin & Nelson, 2005/2017, p. 69). Examining the lived experience of women whose sexuality acted as a path to spirituality may contribute to the type of depth of understanding to which Dilthey refers, the method requiring a setting aside of "human consciousness and human categories" in order to become receptive to what the phenomena has to say (pp. 76-77).

Whereas one might suggest objectivity would be maximized by bracketing out my lived experience, I suggest that examination of my personal experience of sexuality as a path to God will enhance my receptivity to the phenomena as it may be further reflected in culture in the form of film. In *Being, Seeking, Telling: Expressive Approaches to Qualitative Adult Education Research* (Willis, Smith, & Collins, 2000), Doug Conlan describes his experience employing the heuristic lens in his own research as a process in which a growing knowledge of self prepares one to enter into conversation with the phenomena (p. 117). In my research I go further than simply using my lived experience as a lens by examining my lived experience as a text.

Feminist Lens

Perhaps it is Jung's focus on the marginalized unconscious that attracts me to his theories or his "criticism of the persistent neglect of the feminine in culture" (Rowland, 2002, p. 45), but I believe his theory of individuation can be more useful if it is rescued from the cultural constraints in which it was born. Jung's theories were formed within a culture of patriarchy and budding capitalism, and whereas he was conscious of how the modern culture was trampling over the feminine, he was not as conscious of his own privileged and powerful position. His definitions of the feminine for example likely both disempowered and empowered women he treated and who worked with him as colleagues. This dynamic seems very clear in hindsight as contributing to those early women Jungian analysts who both embraced their natural abilities when Jung gave them permission to do so, but then gave the credit to Jung or the masculine within, which was identified with man's natural abilities. My research not only brings this to light but my work also proactively seeks to examine Jung's theory within a new context, and in the

process possibly cause it to be more relevant for women than it was. I like how Michael Crotty (1998/2015) describes critical theory as a spiraling process where ongoing re-examination of theories works towards its goals of a just society where systems are equitable and people have more freedom (p. 175). Its focus on bringing to consciousness ways in which language, systems, theories, and assumptions result in oppressing and limiting people reminds me of the implied goals of Jung's theories, which could be said to be the empowerment of the individual to unfold according to his potential in a way that builds a just society.

Even now I have a difficult time explaining why I felt this feeling wash over me of belonging to something larger than myself when I read Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, a book about the unnamed problem of suburban housewives when I was not one myself. Perhaps it was because I felt I was independent and charting my own course and the thought of being constrained in the way these women were caused me to appreciate that I had a luxury they had not. I have also come to understand that my feminist lens is only one type of feminist lens. Author bell hooks (1984/2000) in her ground-breaking critique of feminist theory, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, describes this initial feminist movement as the "plight of a select group of college-educated, middle- and upper-class, married white women—housewives bored with leisure, with the home, with children, with buying products, who wanted more out of life" (p. 1). hooks does not invalidate these concerns, but instead points out that they unfortunately came to define the feminist movement, which means feminism was not a movement with which truly oppressed women could identify with, nor was it a movement that consciously sought to transform the social structure of patriarchal domination.

Methodology

The qualitative method of autoethnography embraces the exploration of the researcher's lived experience as a way to "generalize to a larger group or culture" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 737). Considered a leader in promoting and developing the approach that embraces the personal and autobiographical in research, Carolyn Ellis defines autoethnography as "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 739). Methods that recognize the impossibility of total separation between researcher and the object of research grew out of what has been described as a crisis of confidence in social science research. As poststructuralist and feminist critical theorists for example illuminated the connection between what scientists see and the language they use to describe their findings, the ideal of objective knowledge was weakened (p. 735). Without having words to describe it, I personally experienced this crisis of confidence as a young feminist after reading Merlin Stone's (1976) *When God Was a Woman*, and Riane Eisler's (1988) *The Chalice and the Blade*, when I realized that the manner in which I had been receiving knowledge was given to me through a lens which likely erased at least portions of and marginalized my very existence from a historical and psychological perspective. Whereas there are now many methods where the researchers use their lived experience in order to inform the research process as they seek to understand their own experience within a larger cultural group, autoethnography has become an overarching term for studies that connect the personal to the larger culture (p. 740).

One could see the development of autoethnographic research methods as a welcome compensation to what had been a one-sided and simplistic view of how

knowledge is created, but the method has its critics. Whereas researchers like Ellis and Bochner (2000) continue to push the boundaries of including the personal in research, for example as reflected in the development of evocative autoethnography, in her article *Toward a Moderate Autoethnography* (2016), Sarah Stahlke Wall holds the tension between autoethnography as valuable contribution to social science and criticisms of the method as narcissistic. Based on a review of a sample of autoethnographic manuscripts, Wall expresses concern about the current direction of autoethnography, including too little attention paid to defining terms, a lack of analysis needed to connect the personal to the culture, an inordinate display of emotion or divulging of unnecessary personal information, and lack of attention to ethics related to the characters in the personal story and the potential risk to the researcher who is sharing the story (Wall, 2016). These themes offer a useful framework for how to use autoethnography in a way that makes a valuable contribution to the field of depth psychology, the researcher, and the reader, as well as how to avoid the pitfalls that may lead to an undermining of the scholarly contribution.

Participants and materials. My study will not require formal participants, rather I will be analyzing texts, my own lived experience and relating themes I find to the experience of others within culture as expressed in film. I will be analyzing and interpreting three types of texts: those written by others, journal writing and creative work related to my personal experience, and film, where I will look for themes related to my personal experience as present in the collective.

Procedures. The spiral image comes to mind as I attempt to articulate the procedure that seems to be emerging so far in my research. Rather than employing a linear approach to examining text categories or even a logical order within each type of text, I find myself drawn to specific texts for unknown reasons, jumping from scholarly depth psychological writing, to reflecting on a numinous experience with a film or image, to feeling compelled to revisit a film. Each experience with a text seems to prepare me for the next. Whereas it would make sense to proceed in a linear fashion with each subsequent chapter dedicated to the results of analysis and interpretation of texts within a specific category, I have a feeling there will be another way of organizing my findings that has not emerged yet. Consequently, my procedures will reflect conscious attention to the role my unconscious is playing when it comes to the order in which I analyze and interpret texts. This approach seems to align with Apperson's (2008/2009) description of the feminine as spontaneous and unpredictable (p. 3). My initial discomfort but increased capacity to trust in this approach could be a reflection of my detaching from an overdeveloped masculine in favor of embracing my feminine.

Delimitations and limitations. The delimitations of my study include being limited to women's experience, reflections about religion being confined to Western versions of Christianity, purposefully broad definitions of sexuality and spirituality, and definitions of masculine and feminine detached from gender stereotypes as much as possible. The limitations of my study include limiting my research to my lived experience versus including other participants.

Ethical considerations. Autoethnography does not require the same level of attention to ethics as participant research, but I am aware of the possibility that some

characters in my lived experience may recognize themselves even though I do not plan to mention them by name (Wall, 2016). The way I have written about these characters however reflects gratitude for my experiences with them as contributing to my growth, and my writing tends to present personal events as catalysts for insight and meaning. I plan to talk with two people in particular about their role in my topic. Today I feel adequate emotional distance from my topic, but I am certain that unexpected emotions are likely to emerge throughout the process as complexes and archetypal energies are triggered by new memories and images from my unconscious, highlighting the need for rituals of self-care (Romanyshyn, 2013). A depth psychological approach values the imagination and recognizes that what the researcher consciously brings to and wants from the work is only one part of the equation. In a respectful relationship with the work, I seek to become enlightened as to what the soul of the work desires, and this may happen as I welcome and respect the autonomy of all of the texts, including my fantasy, dream, and waking images that emerge (p. xi). Further, as I seek to illuminate how my lived experience may relate to the collective, I respect the autonomy of what Hockley (Hauke & Hockley, 2011) calls the third image, which emerges in the space between the viewer's unconscious and the screen (p. 141). Finally, I pledge to be respectful of the authors of all texts, including film, especially when conclusions differ from mine, and keeping in mind the author's intentions and cultural context, and I strive to meet all APA (American Psychological Association) standards.

Chapter 4

Individuation Part One

In Chapters 4 and 5, I explore how my individuation journey has been shaped by a complex relationship between my sexuality and spirituality within the context of the Jungian theory of individuation. I consider where my experience matches existing theory and where perhaps theory needs to catch up with modern women's experience. In answering the question of why the archetypal forces of sexuality and spirituality, drives that have manifested in such extreme ways, have played so prominently in my individuation, I consider new evidence that women, their bodies, and sexuality were once revered.

In this chapter I introduce the reader to the main characters and events that feature most prominently leading up to and during my individuation journey to date. These characters and events are referenced as I share my understanding of the origins of my sexual and spiritual wounds. Then I consider how my lived experience reflects and does not reflect theory with particular attention to the notion that individuation often begins in midlife, which was true for me. I explore additional concepts related to individuation theory in Chapter 5, including complexes, archetypes, and some Greek Gods and Goddesses that seem to have been present during my journey.

The Main Characters and Events

In my analysis, I refer to several men with whom I felt significant and mysterious attraction. Out of respect for every one of these men who played such an important role in my life, I use pseudonyms to protect their identity. In addition, the two men I refer to most in my research have reviewed and approved the wording of these references. The

first boy I felt attraction to in fifth grade I refer to as Doug, my seventh-grade attraction I refer to as Adam, and my college attraction I refer to as Tom. The use of ex-husband or now ex-husband to refer to the man to whom I was married for 24 years is clear. Finally, the relationship through which the archetypal forces of sexuality and spirituality made themselves known to me I refer to as my first post-divorce relationship and by the name Phillip.

In addition to these men, there are a small number of events that in hindsight were significant turning points before and during my individuation journey. I speak about them as synchronicities, many of which I came to see as orchestrated by the Greek God Hermes. Later in this chapter, I spend time considering how Hermes has been a constant companion during my individuation and even the impetus for my initial acceptance of the invitation to the journey. When considered chronologically, the first event took place when I was about 38; I had a sudden realization that something was missing in my life. The next few events took place when I was about 48, and in hindsight, they signaled the beginning of the end of my marriage and coincided with answering the call to study depth psychology. The next series of events began with being swept up in what became a transformational relationship with Phillip, which led to my reconnecting with my feminine in a way that reconciled the opposing forces of sexuality and spirituality within me. One final event signaled the need to end this relationship, which allowed me to more fully process its meaning and consider how my experience may be contributing to new expressions of the archetypal energies related to sexuality and spirituality within the collective.

My hope is that the characters, events, and timeline will flow smoothly for the reader resulting in an engaging reading of my analysis and findings.

Spiritual Wounds

Words matter, and part of my individuation journey has been about words. There was a moment during my recent re-exploration of Christianity when I fell in love with Jesus, and I became a fan of women scholars who are in fact trying to rescue Christianity from the grips of patriarchy. I agree with Carol Gilligan's (Gilligan & Snider, 2018) definition of patriarchy as a "culture based on gender binary or hierarchy" (p. 6). Rosemary Radford Ruether (2012), professor of feminist theology, presents evidence that there was resistance from the start towards the removal of the Goddess and the feminine from religious life. Catherine LaCugna (1993), who was a Catholic theologian, argued that since doctrine is written within a cultural context, it could be reinterpreted. It seems a momentous task to be able to create the momentum needed to undo the damage that has been done to both women and men by the interpretation of Christianity that has elevated the masculine and men over the feminine and women. Words matter. Words can hurt, and when certain words that hurt are protected, it works against equality and justice, as feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon (1993) pointed out in her book *Only Words*. I had not explored the potential meaning behind my semi-conscious resistance to using the word God until a particular event brought it fully into consciousness. This event, which was possibly another trick orchestrated by Hermes, was the first of several events that quickly led to the eventual end of my transformational relationship with Phillip. I was with two friends who I often refer to as my *favorite Christians* because they seem to embody all that is good—not perfect—in Christian dogma. After expressing my gratitude

to the Universe for the spiritual growth I felt I was experiencing through this relationship, one of them corrected me by suggesting that I give credit where credit is due – to God.

As I often do in situations like this, I just nodded. At the time I judged myself for not being able to do something as simple as use the word God. My body just squirmed.

Up to this point in this research, I have used the terms spirituality, God, and the Divine more or less interchangeably. However, my experience researching this topic has led me to gravitate towards one over the others. More often I will use Divine instead of God or spirituality for two reasons. The term spirituality feels too neutral and disembodied. What I have been searching for is a relationship with the source of all creation, which I feel is present within me. If the source of creation is within me, Jung's concept of the Self feels like a natural fit, but if I walked around talking about God as Self, I am positive I would be misunderstood. Jung did suggest that we experience God or the transcendent through the Self, but he was adamant about separating the potential ontological reality of God from the experience of God psychologically. *Psychology and Western Religion* (Jung, 1955-1958/1984), presents a selection of Jung's writings related to his interpretation of Western religion that contributed to his psychological theories. Jung suggested that even though the existence of God could not be proven, the effects of God, which are experienced psychologically cannot be denied. Jung said "God is an obvious and non physical fact ... I am sufficiently convinced of the effects man has always attributed to a divine being." (p. 259, para. 1589). Others, such as Jungian analyst Irene Claremont de Castillejo (1973/1997), have referred to the Self as the bridge to God or the transcendent.

For now I have settled on using *Divine* over *divine* out of humility and respect for the sacred and unknowable transcendent force that is the creator of all. Whereas God for me feels to be equated with the masculine patriarchal God, Divine does not seem to have been co-opted by anyone or any group that presumes to know the unknowable. On the other hand, there is some inconsistency among sources, some suggesting that divine refers to God, and others suggesting that divine refers to the monotheistic God, a god, deity, or supreme being. The word God seems to be strongly connected with specific religious dogmas that present God as a masculine father figure, which for me is a strong statement against the feminine and, by extension, women. On the other hand, I was pleased to read recent remarks by Molly T. Marshall, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary from her opening statements at an international conference in 2019. An online article (Allen, 2019) appearing in *Baptist News Global* captured what Marshall thinks about the stubborn interpretation of the concept of Trinity that perpetuates the belief that women are subordinate. “That’s theological malarkey, to be sure,” Marshall stated. My excitement for her courageous declaration quickly turned into anxiety as I imagined the attacks and threats that likely followed her speech.

I cannot reconcile the unacknowledged atrocities that have been committed against women and children supported by or in the name of patriarchal religions with evidence that at one time the Goddess, the feminine, women, women’s bodies, and sexuality were an important part of earlier belief systems. There are plenty of examples of loving and positive expressions and manifestations of religious dogma, but the label God has been co-opted, abused, and used to limit the notion of what the concept points to, which ultimately is unknowable. It would be one thing if the interpreters of dogma

acknowledged and offered apologies and reparations for these acts and interpretations, but I am not aware that this has been done on a large or small scale. I now feel that my using that term in fact contributes to the perpetuation of other limiting ideas about women, their bodies, and sexuality. And I now have a name for the dynamic that is at play when people in authority try to circle around and attempt to reinterpret text in order to make the clearly stated limiting belief more palatable. Co-opting effectively captures what feels like a covert attempt to reinterpret Biblical verses by making the underlying sexist belief more palatable to those whom the belief seeks to subordinate.

In *Sacred Pleasure* (2011), cultural historian and systems scientist Riane Eisler presents theories based on new evidence showing that patriarchy, which she refers to as a “dominator model” of social organization, did not always exist, nor did it likely develop as a natural part of evolution. The theory suggests that as the dominator tendencies of the Indo-Europeans who migrated from increasingly harsh climates were forced onto societies that reflected a more peaceful partnership model, it was necessary to co-opt those society’s earlier beliefs, which eventually and gradually resulted in changed myths (p. 28). My understanding of Eisler’s reference to partnership model is a culture where neither men nor women are subordinate. In fact, the author outlines what likely was the process of co-opting earlier myths having to do with the Goddess into some of the Greek and Roman myths that many assume are in their original form. For example, evidence points to the likelihood that this is what happened to the Greek myth about Demeter and Persephone (p. 148). I felt a twinge of intuitive knowing as I recalled the difficulty the women in my class on depth psychology and mythic tradition had accepting that the rape of Persephone was to be understood as psychological rape. In *Tracking the Wild Woman*

Archetype: A Guide to Becoming a Whole, In-divisible Woman (2018), depth psychotherapist and author Stacey Shelby, captures what feels like the depth psychological consensus that “the rape of Persephone as maiden . . . is an intrapsychic maturation process whereby the innocent and narcissistic young feminine must have the ground fall out from under her so she can learn of her own depths” (p. 107). The processing of maturing can be startling and entail much suffering, but learning of our depths seems to imply that this is also a soulful process. Rape is often described by female victims as a murdering of their soul, which is the opposite of the deepening of soul through psychological suffering. I feel it is time to challenge this interpretation and assumption that the Greek and Roman myths that we have come to know were not in some cases co-opted versions of earlier myths. The discussion in my class did not include that the common images of the rape of women during the time these myths were most popular actually mirrored how much the rape of women was part of the culture of the time. The attempt by some depth psychologists to make this myth relevant by imagining the rape of Persephone as psychological rape does not make sense and feels like a personal psychological violation. There is no reason to deny that perhaps some of these interpretations also exist within the context of the stereotypes of a certain time.

A modern example of co-opting is found in Dr. Emerson Eggerichs’ (2010) book *Love and Respect: The Love She Most Desires, the Respect He Desperately Needs*. With a doctorate in Child and Family Ecology and experience as a pastor who provides marriage counseling, the author presents a very compelling approach for married couples. I came to this book as a recommendation by Phillip, who happened to hold fundamentalist Christian beliefs. The relationship book was written through a Christian

lens, and because I was re-exploring Christianity, I found myself particularly eager to find interpretations of doctrine that equalized women's position to men. My excitement grew as I read the book and the author called on current secular relationship research and asked both men and women to learn to see through the perspective of their partner. He seemed to be asking men to develop their feminine and women to develop their masculine; this intrigued and excited me. However, he grounds his approach in the Biblical verses Ephesians 5:22-33, which in the New International Version (NIV) states unequivocally that wives are to submit themselves to their husbands in all ways. The author suspiciously chooses just two specific verses that emphasize that husbands are to love their wives as they love their own bodies, and wives are to offer respect to their husbands, regardless of whether they deserve respect. Who could argue with that?

As a whole I was able to take what was useful from the book as I took the bait to focus on just these two verses, but there were two tendencies of the author that now make it clear his attempt, conscious or unconscious, was to co-opt or leverage the progress won by the very feminists he refers to in his book as "those" or "the feminists." Interesting that he does not credit feminists with the hard-won victory of making it a crime for a husband to rape and abuse his wife. He makes room for the fact that his approach will not be attractive for those who prefer relationship as being between equal partners or same sex relationships. What bothered me most was when he spoke about sexual trauma, his message was clear that regardless of the suffering wives may have or are experiencing related to sexual trauma, they ought to put Jesus above their personal well-being and satisfy their husband's sexual needs. This book is a best seller, reflecting the real need that married couples have for learning how to relate to each other better, and also

exposing the gap left by those who could be offering a more partnership-oriented approach. I feel the urgency of Eisler's (2011) words when she warned that times of systems disequilibrium when conventional systems break down, like we are experiencing now, provide opportunities for transformative social change. Unfortunately, these times are also an opportunity for the dominator system to "reconstitute itself in ways that merely co-opt some partnership elements" in a way that maintains a system that "provides social and economic rewards for domination and conquest" (p. 177).

My patriarchal God wound is deep, and I can only credit my Self, the organizing principle Jung refers to, for orchestrating the events that led me to fall in love with a fundamentalist Christian, who would end up having the opposite effect on me than he had probably hoped, a final letting go of Christianity. This surrender has been accompanied by a newly developed confidence in proclaiming my allegiance to the higher principles that guide my life. Consciously reflecting on and relating to our personal complexes seems to free up psychic energy for the next task of individuation, which is being receptive to and accepting the archetypal energy that wishes to flow through us and manifest in a new way which contributes to the evolution of consciousness. The timing of being swept up in a romantic relationship with a fundamentalist Christian is definitely a meaningful coincidence, or synchronicity in Jungian terms. What about the secondary aspect of sexuality that was not only part of this relationship but ended up being closely intertwined with my spiritual path?

Sexual Wounds

The realization that my sexuality and spirituality had been closely intertwined for most of my life became illuminated for me through another synchronistic event. I was

conscious of the significant coincidence of seeing Phillip after a six-month period of no contact with him combined with reconnecting with Tom, who was the man in college to whom I felt the same kind of attraction 25 years earlier. The plans to meet up with Tom, and another friend—the three of us had been friends in college—were made three days prior to my planned visit to Phillip. After visiting Phillip, I met up with Tom and my friend at a campground and to say it was surreal is an understatement. I did not know how I would feel seeing Tom again; I had liked him very much in college. After a couple of drinks I awkwardly shared that I thought he had rejected me because of my promiscuous behavior. He looked at me confused and then confessed that he had loved me and never stopped loving me. He visibly felt relief after his confession, and I thanked him for the gift of disrupting the story I had been telling myself for 25 years that contributed to the shame I felt about my sexuality. I remember feeling overwhelmed by the similarities between Tom and Phillip. Both of them were ENFP (extraverted, intuitive, feeling, perceiving) when it came to psychological type and associated with the same Christian denomination, although Tom had overcome his rigid religious framework.

Over the next few weeks, Tom shared more about his experience during college of being with me, and I wondered whether he was projecting onto me some kind of fantasy about reuniting. Over the next couple months as the three of us stayed connected via texts, I assumed this had more to do with Tom's individuation journey than with mine. A few months later, however, I became preoccupied with my being able to access only a handful of memories about my relationship with Tom, and this prompted me to believe there was potentially more meaning to the reconnection than I thought. As Tom shared his perception of me during our younger days as a goddess, our mutual passionate

affection, and his declaration that his now successful business was born out of our relationship, I could only call up feelings of rejection. I suspect my feeling of rejection by Tom, which occurred after several failed attempts at seeking sexual connection resulted in suffering and the repression of most of the relationship by me. Following this relationship were other sexual encounters that did not have the same numinous energy.

Two things Tom shared following our reconnection resulted in significant insights for me, the first being how I helped him overcome his own sexual hang-ups and the second how I loved to dance. It was a gift that I was able to resist the temptation at literal and physical reconnection and instead embrace the spiritual growth that occurred by considering the symbolic meaning of our past relationship and our current reconnection. Following my perceived rejection by Tom back in college, the feelings of shame related to sexuality and spirituality somehow became united and stored in my unconscious and my physical body. I distinctly remember the moment a couple years following the end of my relationship with Tom when I decided *I hated men*, which was immediately followed by meeting of my now ex-husband. Three months of dating my now ex-husband was accompanied by an unconscious resistance, followed by a specific moment that feels now to have been a kind of relief when I acquiesced to admitting I really cared about him. My relationship with Phillip, the first relationship following my divorce, brought these wounds to the surface, and reconnecting with Tom resulted in new insights about how these wounds formed and became inseparable. The reader will learn more about how these insights occurred in subsequent chapters.

Following months of texting conversations with Tom, my understanding of my natural way of existing in the world suddenly became clearer and even empowering.

Years of attempting to find out what went wrong suddenly evolved into flashes of insight about the myths I am possibly living and the archetypes that have been attempting to find expression through my personal experience. I came to this insight by working backwards. Experiences of what I have named spiritual orgasm during my relationship with Phillip seemed possible only because of my growing capacity to withstand awkwardness and vulnerability, as well as being able to surrender to something beyond my control. The orgasms for me were experienced as different forms of union—union with my own feminine and with the Divine. It felt as if the relationship with Phillip, which was experienced both literally and symbolically, was the vessel through which the union was able to occur. I believe the first act of surrender that allowed this possibility came years earlier when I let go of the need to fix my marriage. This first act of surrender, cracked the shell of safety my marriage represented, and led to my eventual acceptance of the later invitation to my individuation journey. Whereas my marriage acted as the hiding place and the buffer between my past wounding and my healing, it also provided a much-needed respite and opportunity to develop in other ways. My ex-husband loved, respected, supported, and encouraged me, and we made two beautiful children together. My Self perhaps decided when I could handle the next leg of my life's journey and the invitation it presented was too compelling to ignore.

During the months following reconnection with Tom, his descriptions of what I would call my “being” prompted me to consider that my natural way is sexual. I remember a time when I embraced my sexuality despite negative reactions by family members. Unfortunately, a steady dose of further judgment in the form of cultural and religious messages not only put me at odds with a part of myself, I began interpreting my

personal experiences in a way that built a wall of shame within my psyche. Coming into relationship with one's sexuality seems as important as developing a healthy relationship with one's anger for example. Modern sex education, when it is available, is focused on facts, prevention of disease and pregnancy, and judgment. There does not seem to be a framework for learning how to respect, revere, and relate to our sexuality as a creative, spiritual, and intimate energy. I have experienced intense attractions that were more than physical attraction to four men during my lifetime, Doug, Adam, Tom, and Phillip. What all four attractions had in common was an intense feeling of awkwardness and vulnerability on my part. I wonder if it is common for girls or boys to feel the kind of sexual and soulful connection that I felt at a young age, although I did not have a name for it then. I only felt it as intense vulnerability and self-consciousness. My natural way of being seems to have been and continues to be an intense and sexual way of being. I am fully aware of my sexual energy, its effect on others, and my intense desire to connect in a way that goes beyond the purely physical. It is rare though that I feel the kind of attraction that breaks me open like what I experienced during my first post-divorce relationship with Phillip.

Individuation: Theory vs. Lived Experience

The first part of my individuation journey, which began when my marriage began falling apart, took the form of unraveling personal complexes related to my relationship with men. After I grew in my capacity to relate to and establish boundaries with men, I was plunged into the second part of my individuation journey. I was aware of being swept up by an archetypal energy, but only over time would I understand and appreciate the interconnection between sexuality and spirituality. In addition, as I came to relate to

the powerful sexual and spiritual energies, I gained further insights about how this work is possibly contributing to the healing of an ancestral wound. Further, a critical aim of this research is to explore whether my personal experience is reflected in the larger collective.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1963/1989), Jung stated that his theory of individuation is of primary importance to his psychological framework (p. 209). He suggests that the unconscious is a dynamic part of our psyche that transforms as the ego relates to it, and that individuation exists as an innate drive to unfold as one's true potential, the result of which is finding meaning in one's existence (Stein, 2006/2015, pp. xii-xiii). However, individuating individuals are a rare occurrence because individuation requires the conscious choice to embark on what can be an exhausting and dangerous journey of coming into contact with the contents of the unconscious (Palmer, 1997, pp.144-145). In his book, *What Do You Really Want? The Self's Search for Itself* (2019), psychotherapist Thomas Galten suggests that it is the Self, which Jung referred to as an ordering principle in our psyche, which makes the choice to individuate and does the actual individuating. He also suggests that we are the Self that is individuating. I have experienced this sense of being led by something that is me and not me at the same time, reflected in moments where I simultaneously feel compulsion to act and resistance to act. During what Jung refers to as his confrontation with the unconscious, he often felt as if he were crazy. I have felt this potential danger during my individuation journey, especially when I find myself involuntarily living in a way that is quite opposite from the first part of my life. In addition to facing the hidden truth of how I felt about my marriage, unleashed sexual energy led to many embarrassing moments of projection onto

men, followed by a compensating hyper responsibility and goal orientation. The one-sided responsibility then turned to what felt like laziness and lack of motivation to do almost anything. I often felt tortured feeling the way I did, because I feared I would do something irresponsible. For example, after a dream about black birds coming at me and a near panic attack on a plane the next day, I knew I had to make a change. It was as if a previously silenced character in my psyche had been unleashed to make its voice heard. Its influence came in the form of weakening my ego's allegiance to safety, control, and responsibility to others.

As this new voice expressed itself as intense desire to detach from what I now felt to be meaningless work, the most my ego could hope for was holding me back from being too extreme in some decisions. The compulsion to be freed from the work that had defined so much of my life was mitigated by my employer's openness to reducing my work schedule (and pay) and slowly transitioning out of my role. I felt immediate relief at having escaped some kind of prison, resulting in intense feelings of joy that lasted several months. Events seemed to work in my favor for the next nine months, at which point my replacement was found. Events stopped working in my favor as I searched for new employment. As I interviewed for other high paying jobs, I could not quell my unexpected feelings of hatred for the idea of doing the same kind of work I had done for the last 20 years. At the same time I had no clear direction to opportunities that might allow me to utilize my new depth psychology lens. I was shocked at the way I felt. Some of what felt like ridiculous proclamations that I just wanted to move to a beach town and be a bartender and work in a bookstore ended up manifesting.

Without a sense of humor about what my unconscious was throwing at me, I might have felt devastated at the turn my life had taken. I became a bartender at my favorite seafood restaurant located on the river, the closest thing to a beach town at the time, and after two weeks of severe anxiety caused by my perfection complex, I relaxed into the role and began to have some fun. The compulsion to compensate and come into relationship with these opposite traits was strong and often felt against my will. This scared me sometimes, because I did not know when it was going to end. During those times I reminded myself that the journey towards wholeness might include drastic compensation in the form of expressing some deep-seated unconscious desires or being released for the self-imposed constraints on what I had considered to be acceptable behavior. To do this successfully requires consciousness and reflection. But that did not seem to be enough for my Self. I never imagined that I would still be looking for a new job nine months later. I took this as a sign that I needed to learn to feel secure in an insecure situation, this new attitude being rewarded with synchronistic gifts of small jobs arriving out of nowhere just in time that provided yet one more month of financial security.

This example also illustrates the important roles the ego plays during the process of individuation. Even if ultimately there is no ego as Galten's (2019) reading of Jung suggests, it has been helpful for me to think of the ego as an entity that both resists and invites my Self's demands to individuate. Like Jung, during this time of unraveling and disorientation I had to be able to function in the world, which included paying my bills. But my psyche would not allow me to go back to my old ways. I beat myself up because I did not want the high-paying jobs for which I was most qualified, but I did not know

exactly how to go about finding work that matched my newfound interests. I felt a kind of psychological torture in this in between space, which suggests that I was to grow in my capacity to exist in the liminal space that Murray Stein (1983) suggests is a constant companion during individuation.

Jung's individuation theory seems to imply that there is some moment when one feels whole and that this is the goal of the Self. At the same time he suggested that we never completely overcome our complexes. In *On the Nature of Dreams* (Jung, 1948/1972), Jung stated, "This process is, in effect, the spontaneous realization of the whole man" (p. 292, para. 557). There seems to be a paradox in this statement, in that Jung equates a process, which happens over time, with a realization, which happens in a specific moment in time. As I reflect on Jung's suggestion that there is what he calls a "universal human being in us, whose goal is the ultimate integration of conscious and unconscious" (p. 292, para. 557), it seems that the best we can hope for are small steps or even giant leaps towards this inevitable goal. On the other hand, the spontaneous sense of wholeness felt during the realization of a significant insight does feel to transcend literal time, as if one is given a glimpse of eternity. Even though I am a mere five years into my individuation journey, I am comforted by archetypal psychologist James Hillman's (1976/1992) perspective that an ultimate sense of wholeness ought not necessarily be a conscious goal. In fact, the need to achieve an ultimate goal seems more the need of the ego than to reflect the mysterious workings of the collective unconscious.

My conscious decision to explore what I did not know about myself, what I was in denial about, what I did not want to remember, or what I could not accept as my gifts began when I stopped resisting the unraveling of my marriage. Instead of setting our

sights on achieving an outcome, perhaps embracing the journey and experiencing many small moments or brief periods of wholeness might be good enough. I like the image Hillman paints of a long-term process of continuing to come into relationship with the characters in our psyche as they take turns prompting us on our journey of unfolding into a more authentic human being. It sounds more like an adventure. If at the root of complexes are archetypes, which exist in the collective unconscious and are unknowable, it does not seem possible to ever exhaust the process of reconciling the potential opposites even within our own psyche. In her book *Complex, Archetype, Symbol: in the Psychology of C. G. Jung* (1959/1974), Jolande Jacobi, a founding member of the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, offers an interpretation of Jung's concepts of the relationship between complex and archetype, which I found to be helpful. Not only is the complex a "healthy component of the psyche" (p. 25), it is only pathological when it remains captured in the personal contents of the individual's life. When I released my personal mother from the burden of manifesting perfectly the archetype of the Great Mother, she remained an imperfect human being for whom I felt compassion for doing the best she could. Further, my compassion towards her released me from the grips of my own perfection complex. What remained was an enhanced understanding of the human condition and how continued reflection contributes to the evolution of consciousness, which may act as a doorway for new expressions of the archetype.

The spiral image presented itself to me early on in my individuation journey, and it became my first tattoo. I find it a comforting symbol of the small movements of death and rebirth that make up my journey so far. In *Introduction to the Religious and Psychological Problems of Alchemy* (Jung, 1944/1968), Jung talks about that point when

one's religion no longer acts as a sufficient framework for making sense of life. Where is one to go? The feeling that one is now on a solitary journey is captured in Jung's suggestion that "The patient must be alone if he is to find out what it is that supports him when he can no longer support himself" (p. 28, para. 32). I began to see in my own journey how my continued attempts to force myself into a framework that made no sense reflected my fear of having no new framework to take its place. On the other hand, the spiral seems to symbolically capture my alternating movements between detachment from Christianity and formation of new personal beliefs. Each time I re-explored Christianity, I discovered principles that were universal and these became part of my new framework. This realization in hindsight reminds me to have more patience with myself. The way my journey and realizations have unfolded is the way it has needed to unfold, and this reflects Jung's suggestion that out of the seeming chaos gradually one gets the sense that one is on a path leading somewhere (p. 28, para. 32). I have come to understand that my spiral tattoo is a reminder that my efforts at becoming more conscious, which manifest as reflections about what feels like alternating events of death and rebirth, are leading somewhere. Sometimes death has taken the form of a drastic change in my life, and other times it has felt more like a final letting go of a limiting belief. I began to look at re-activation of complexes as opportunities to laugh at myself and then go a little deeper to gain a new nugget of insight that will help me get through a transition of unknown length.

My ego began to feel more like a partner from whom I asked to hold the tension between performing distinct roles and tasks, although it was not always clear which role or task was needed at a certain time. The first task, which continues to be most difficult

for my ego, was to relinquish the control it had needed to protect me from potential suffering and memories of suffering, as well as help me conform to the expectations of society. Once my ego surrendered, its second task was to prevent me from being swallowed up by what came up from my unconscious. The third role my ego needed to play was to help me make sense of images, emotions, and events that did not make sense within the context of the past, which had now been unraveled. New interpretations and application of new insights needed to be integrated into my attitude or approach to life.

The temporary periods of discomfort continued to be followed by acknowledgment that I was indeed moving toward a more authentic version of myself, which was followed by awkwardness as I evolved into someone I did not recognize sometimes. Along the way I had moments of intense wholeness, but they were fleeting, and I came to appreciate that a realistic goal might be that these moments increase in number, duration, intensity, and frequency. Perhaps the goal of individuation could also be building the capacity to withstand multiple periods of death and rebirth, which requires a capacity to exist in the in between space. I eventually embraced the process, which sometimes felt more like symbolic dismemberment, without knowing what would emerge when my psyche put itself together again. I now realize there may never be this moment when my psyche has completely arrived. It is not clear what exactly determines how long the most intense part of the process might last; perhaps it is related to the extent to which certain drives have been repressed or unacknowledged. What I have more of a handle on now is the death/rebirth process, that there is symbolic meaning that can be made of events that seem to be out of one's control, and that my ego is able to reflect and integrate this meaning into my conscious life.

Author of at least three books on individuation, Murray Stein (1983, 1998, 2006/2015) expands on Jung's theory by offering different ways of articulating the process and applying the theory to one's life. I found these books to be complementary and effective in helping me acquire both an intellectual understanding as well as an embodied relationship to my individuation journey. In *The Principle of Individuation: Toward the Development of Human Consciousness* (2006/2015) Stein describes the principle and the accompanying process in theoretical terms. He begins with a clear description of the overall alternating movements of unraveling. The unraveling or making sense of what one finds in the unconscious happens on two levels, the personal and the archetypal (p. 18). Stein's description of how synchronicities, symbols, and a sense of numinosity or holiness that accompanies their presence reflect the spiritual nature of the individuation journey (p. 32).

In *Transformation: Emergence of the Self* (1998), Stein's description of the in-between state of caterpillar to butterfly burst the romantic image I had of this metaphor. His detailed and graphic description of the actual disintegration of the caterpillar form that occurs before the emergence of the butterfly form eerily captures what I have experienced when it comes to moments of psychological death and rebirth during my individuation journey. He introduces the notion of liminality, which is the state of being between what one used to be and the unformed new person one is becoming (p. 7). In one particular moment, I felt completely lost, and the feeling was accompanied by an image of a doorway. I had stepped partially through the doorway, but one foot remained behind. I seemed to be exactly between two worlds, and I described to my therapist that I had an idea of what I was shedding but no idea of what was to take its place. This feeling of

disorientation was disturbing for me. I had not realized how dramatic the metamorphosis was for a butterfly or me. Having a framework for the process of individuation does not mean the suffering that accompanies the disintegration that is required for transformation is lessened.

Stein (1998) continues to describe that from the beginning of its life as a larva, it continually sheds its skin in order to grow, leaving it completely vulnerable until its new skin is formed. Eventually, the main act involves the gradual and complete disintegration of the larva, which is replaced by the newly evolved butterfly form. Perhaps I can particularly relate to the sense of vulnerability. I have described my awkwardness and self-consciousness as feeling naked and exposed. Perhaps the cocoon that acts as the protective vessel for the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly takes the form of the framework that is offered by Jung's individuation theory. The radical nature of crawling caterpillar to soaring butterfly calls to mind another metaphor for transformation, that of the lotus flower that grows out of the mud at the bottom of the pond. Neither the butterfly nor the lotus flower bears any resemblance to their earlier state, but yet the ultimate image was present. "A transformation in which underlying latent structures come to the surface and assume leading positions, while other features that were prominent change radically or disappear" (p. 15). I find it interesting that this metaphor brought a more complete understanding of individuation for me. The framework of individuation theory does allow one to have an awareness of the experience and a knowing that its purpose is to unfold as a more authentic version of oneself. The lotus flower and butterfly as latent images contribute to my trust that the latent image within my psyche that my Self is revealing will be just as beautiful.

Written before the first two but read last, Stein's (1983) *In MidLife* describes how the call to individuate often presents itself during midlife, accompanied by some kind of crisis. I was particularly drawn in by Stein's description of the Greek God Hermes as a kind of disrupter and always present during times of transition, which are experienced as liminal space. Further, Stein's suggestion that soulmate experiences often accompany midlife liminality offered me a language in which to describe the central feature of my midlife journey. I began to see Hermes everywhere, playing multiple roles that seemed to match my experience and provided me with some kind of protection and guidance to get through what felt like an endless series of meaningful and often numinous events.

With the framework that seemed to emerge from my understanding of individuation, I now offer my analysis of my lived experience of midlife individuation.

Individuation and Midlife

As much as I sought to live unconventionally, challenging especially gender stereotypes, I cringed as I suddenly acknowledged that in fact the first part of my life unfolded in a very conventional way. This fact was brought to my attention during an annual wine date with a colleague who had known me 19 years. She offered, "Everything you have done and been over the past two decades has turned out to be very conventional, and you are not conventional. It is as if you are now becoming you." Many times this woman had expressed admiration for what she described as my intentional way of living life. For me though the truth of her statement caught me off guard. Jung suggested that individuation involves reclaiming pieces of ourselves that have been repressed, buried, and denied, and I would add compromised. This sentiment is captured powerfully in Jung's suggestion that "The aim of individuation is nothing less than to

divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and of the suggestive power of primordial images on the other" (Jung, 1928/1966, p. 174, para. 269). For example, whereas it was my independent spirit that my ex-husband said he appreciated, I was put to the test even before we married when I was driven to tears by his frustration and disappointment in my decision not to change my name. Only now do I realize that was the last time I won a battle for true independence in my marriage. The emotional toll that one argument had on me contributed to my capitulation in the next most important stand for independence at the time, which was my desire to have my children's names hyphenated. I lost that battle, or more accurately, I chose to lose that battle. I could have won, but the prize may have been the end of that relationship. And in the meantime I felt that I was emasculating him because I was the first woman in his family to not take her husband's name. The defeat felt by what felt like small compromises of my independence was perhaps compensated through my manic need to make a difference outside of our relationship. Challenging conventional roles that women and men were playing was common for women of my generation, but the psychological stress that was the price was tucked away in the unconscious. I was aware of the little battles but not the cultural war that was being played out within this most intimate of relationships.

In another ground-breaking book *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body—New Paths to Power and Love* (2011), Riane Eisler, cultural historian and systems scientist, reminds us that systems of social organization that rely on hierarchy require the cooperation of those who are ranked lower in order to maintain the hierarchy (p. 247). This first compromise I made may seem trivial at first glance, but when one

considers that it was the visible emasculation of my now ex-husband that caused so much suffering for me, one hopefully is able to see the insidious nature of the patriarchal, or dominator model of social organization. For my ex-husband's sense of worth to be threatened by my desire to maintain my own family identity illustrates the harm done to both women and men by the system that now maintains itself unconsciously. "Ironically, men's stereotypical socialization for conquest creates part of their pain" (p. 254). That my independence threatened my now ex-husband's masculine identity also is indicative of the fragile nature of the wounded masculine. I am positive that my ex-husband did not view his attachment to family tradition as a way to express dominance over me. What is clear is that my expression of self-determination wounded his sense of masculine identity, and I was put in a no-win position. Neither my ex-husband nor I were aware of any of this as an unconscious battle. In fact, for the most part my ex-husband was a perfect example of a modern man secure in his masculinity and not threatened by strong women.

Eisler's (2011) book presents a comprehensive outline of current theories that effectively dismantle the myth that patriarchy, or the dominator model of social organization, was always present, evolved naturally, or was necessary for the evolution of the human species. The theory suggests that a more aggressive model of social organization originated with the migration of Indo-Europeans who fled increasingly harsh climate conditions. Gilligan and Snider's (2018) recent book *Why Does Patriarchy Persist?* offers a theory that patriarchy persists as a defense mechanism against the risks associated with vulnerability and intimate connection. I feel this is important for my journey because whereas I consciously sought to rebel against the limitations imposed on

women, I unwittingly participated in the perpetuation of the very system that continues to limit women and other marginalized groups in the most stealth of ways. Since individuation, in part, is about coming into contact with what is in the shadow, my shadow is full of a complex mix of intuitive and mysterious knowledge of an ancient truth that perhaps an increasing number of women and men are remembering. The most interesting and empowering part of Eisler's (2011) work is the insight that the amount of energy that has and continues to be focused on controlling women's bodies is a dead give-away to the reverence that at one time existed for women, their bodies and sexuality. If patriarchy had always been, then there would be no need to go to such extreme lengths, as reflected in many practices occurring in this century, to oppress the Other, in this case women. Eisler's work is important to my research for another reason. She makes the connection between the maintenance of a dominator model and sacralization of sexual violence, suggesting that women's bodies and sexuality are no less than ground zero of the tension between the destructive dominator model and the evolutionary push towards a partnership model where pleasure is sacred instead of pain and suffering (p. 3). In fact, she suggests that the evolution of love and sexuality is connected to an evolutionary push towards the higher consciousness required to save our planet (p. 174). I will talk more about this aspect in another chapter.

Jung suggested that midlife began approximately at the age of 35, but what seems more helpful is the description of the shift that seems to occur when it comes to what the psyche wants at a certain point in life. The shift is often felt as a loss of purpose, intense desires, confusing and compulsive behaviors, disturbing emotions and neurotic symptoms like anxiety and depression, and even somatic issues. Without awareness of the shift of

energy, which Jung suggests reflects an archetypal drive towards wholeness, people can become the victim of an unconscious process instead of a willing participant in a journey towards finding new meaning and purpose in life. I now can locate the exact moment when this shift occurred for me. It was subtle and distinct at the same time, but I admit that I misinterpreted the meaning of the event. It could be that I was not ready for an all out individuation process, and I needed the next ten years to develop in some way that would prepare me for the main event. I did take note though and the shift was dramatic enough that I shared the insight it brought with my now ex-husband.

I was about 38, the mother of two young children, and on this day I was engaged in an activity that was a normal part of my daily existence at the time. I was out on a walk with my children, the only kind of physical activity I had time for as a working mom. Out of my unconscious came a dramatic realization that over time I had lost a piece of myself. It was an image that brought the realization. Around the corner from our house, I looked up and noticed the sunshine peering through the spaces between the swaying leaves of the tall trees. In that moment I realized that I had gone from my energetic approach to life, which had always manifested as jumping out of bed in the morning and looking forward to the day, to now only experiencing occasional glimpses of what I described at the time as happiness. It was not that I did not fully enjoy my life, especially time with my children, and in fact I felt blessed to be able to work just three days per week in order to develop deep relationships with them. I relished those days of the week. I also relished building my new consulting company that served small nonprofits. I really was able to fully participate in both worlds because I was not interested in success in the corporate

world. The insight that I was not the same energetic and joyful person was devastating for me.

I took what felt like a risk in sharing this with my now ex-husband. It is interesting how one moment can put a certain path into motion. His response to my moment of suffering was: *Why can't you just be happy?* It was actually a good question. In a way my internalizing this as my personal issue let my husband off the hook, but in another way, I became empowered through my efforts to feed my new insatiable appetite for learning about myself through exploring spirituality, mindfulness, and yoga. At the same time, I felt compelled to found Friends of Bradford Beach in order to reverse the deterioration of our downtown beach. My eight-year obsession with this project served two purposes, the first a way for me to continue to deny my unconscious desire to end my marriage, but also as something that brought me to life and became a vessel for containing what was beginning to emerge from my unconscious. I have referred to myself as a slow learner, but I think this time was needed for me to prepare for the moment when I would have to respond courageously to the synchronistic image that called me to both study depth psychology and engage in the process that led to the ending of my marriage. This decision put me on a path that required my courage to answer the call at all costs, and this decision also put me on the path to reconnecting with my feminine, my body, sexuality, and my relationship with the Divine.

My individuation journey seems to have reflected the components that Stein (2006/2015) offers. Often it is something dramatic that prompts the kind of letting go required for something from the unconscious to reach consciousness. The released contents from the unconscious may come in various forms, for example, as a

synchronistic event, a powerful image, a neurotic symptom, or physical symptom or even injury or health crisis. The purpose of the contents breaking into consciousness is to get one's attention to address what stands in the way of further psychological and spiritual growth. At this point one either consciously chooses to embark on the journey of self-discovery as I did when I said aloud *How did I get myself here?* or avoids the journey. Often the denial of the call from one's soul manifests as unconscious attempts to fill a void through addictive behaviors. Once the invitation has been accepted, the first assignment of individuation is to examine the roots of the patterns of thinking and behaving that have become limitations to development. As one becomes enlightened as to the roots of limiting thinking and behaving, projections onto others to fulfill needs are taken back and new patterns are developed. This stage is followed by an opportunity to come into contact with the deeper universal drives that are part of the collective unconscious of humanity. These drives, which Jung called archetypes, are a kind of psychic DNA that passes down a mysterious blueprint of core experiences that manifest uniquely in different times and cultures (Jung, 1936/37/1969, p. 42, para. 89). If one can develop the humility needed to become open to how certain archetypal energies are seeking unique expression through an individual, one can appreciate that it is one's personal wounds that act as a doorway to and capacity for the archetypal energy to manifest in a way that contributes to the evolution of personal and ultimately human consciousness.

The next defining moment came ten years later when I shared with my now ex-husband that living in the suburbs was killing my soul. I put off sharing this realization for four years after I realized that I just was not happy where we lived. What I find

interesting now is my now ex-husband's implication that forcing this issue might be his non-negotiable in our marriage. Perhaps he unconsciously was ready to move on too. He begrudgingly moved, agreed that the move was in the best interest of our children, but our relationship would never be the same. It was not long after this that a synchronistic event occurred that swept me up so completely that I could not reject it. The call communicated through the Pacifica Graduate Institute logo was strong and my commitment to do whatever it would take to answer that call marked the acceptance by me of the invitation to begin my individuation journey.

Individuation Journey: Hero vs. Heroine

I like the way archetypal psychologist James Hillman (1976/1992) challenges C. G. Jung's suggestion that the purpose of individuation is to achieve some kind of ultimate wholeness, and that there is a single organizing principle he calls the Self that is the facilitator of individuation. Resisting this masculine oriented and limiting perspective offers the opportunity to also challenge the notion that individuation plays out as a Hero's journey. One can definitely imagine how the individuation process might play out that way, a journey that involves the slaying of dragons and the coming back to community to share wisdom in the form of a new gift or purpose. This Hero's journey motif is very prevalent in Western, and especially American culture and is often used as a metaphor for individuation. Other scholars, for example Maureen Murdock (1990), who writes of women's individuation suggests there is another kind of journey, that of the Heroine, where the traits of patience, intelligence, and cunning, are accompanied by the ultimate outcome of a return to relationship. What I find interesting is that this alternate way of looking at individuation seems to be tied to women specifically, which is limiting. It is

empowering for women to claim and name their own process, but I wonder whether men and women alike need to have both a hero's and heroine's journey in order to develop both their masculine and feminine.

Could it be that the Hero's journey contributes to the unfolding of the best version of our masculine, and the Heroine's journey does this for the feminine part of both men and women? The ultimate feeling of wholeness would not be an outcome so much as the capacity to combine the feminine and masculine in a way that contributes to one's ultimate purpose and its contribution to evolving human consciousness. This perspective helps me make sense of my own individuation journey. This seems important because perhaps the Heroine's journey provides a way for men and women to come into relationship with their feminine just as the Hero's journey is a way for women and men to come into relationship with their masculine. The most recent *Tomb Raider* movie (King, G., 2018) seems to illustrate something in between the Hero and Heroine's journey or maybe a combination of the two. The protagonist Lara Croft definitely slays some dragons with weapons, but she also uses her cunning and is motivated by the relationship with her father. When she returns back to normal life, she seems to have come into relationship with her masculine as she accepts her role in helping run her now deceased father's company. She is also in deeper relationship with her feminine as she stays true to her father's secret mission that has more to do with justice rather than profit.

The most confusing component of Jung's theory, that of anima and animus, has become clearer for me as I explore its limitations in applying the theory to my lived experience. In *Concerning the Archetypes, with Special Reference to the Anima Concept* (Jung, 1954/ 1968), Jung likens his concept of anima to what is presented in Chinese

philosophy as the feminine yin that complements the masculine yang (p. 59, para. 119).

Jung goes on to say that this and other male-female pairs of deities have been projected onto man and woman. Confusion has turned into liberation though as I realize what underlies Jung's theory are higher principles which have been clouded by his limited capacity to transcend the times in which he lived. Jung did not have the benefit of evidence that patriarchy not only did not always exist but also that it also did not necessarily emerge as a natural product of evolution. He did identify the archetypal feminine as something that is part of our psychic DNA and labeled it anima, "the feminine and chthonic part of the soul" (Jung, and that it had become overtaken by a one-sided masculine, which he described in one text as "Western fear of the other side" (p. 59, para. 119). Whereas all he had to go on was how women and men typically behaved in his time, he did intuit that there was a one-sidedness to their existence and that what women seemed to be suffering from was suffocation from society's imposed roles for them. What is more interesting is that Jung could intuit that something was missing from men's lives even though men seemed to benefit from the arrangement. He found this through his own experience of coming into relationship with his own feminine nature. This observation is in alignment with Carol Gilligan's (Gilligan & Snider, 2018) suggestion that patriarchy has harmed men too, although it may be more difficult to observe their wounds in a society that elevates their status over that of women.

As part of a generation of women where many have developed masculine traits at the expense of feminine traits, the part of Jung's theory that is the most in flux is that of anima and animus. Careful observation reveals that women today are not necessarily naturally in touch with their anima nor men with their animus. If one of the symptoms of

an undeveloped animus is attachment to and expression of irrational opinions, there seems to be as many men as women who suffer from that trait. Men do not seem to be more prone to making rational decisions or expressing level headed opinions than women. However, it was being around men, studying a male-dominated field in college, and pursuing a male-dominated career in financial planning that did contribute to my masculine traits, but I cannot even be certain about that. Was it my mother's animus that contributed to the expectation that I could go out and achieve anything out in the world? I did not have a clear message from my father or stepfather but they were both supportive. How did my mother develop a relationship with her own animus without a father figure around?

I saw the one-sidedness of the masculine immediately in my first career as a financial planner in the form of elevating mostly men for their willingness to work 80 hours per week to make money for the company. Because financial planners at the time were paid solely based on commission, the more they sold, the more they made. What I found disturbing was the overt suggestion that the more they worked the more they were benefiting their families. I just could not buy into this belief that my worth to my family had to do with making money. I went on to become a successful financial planner that always ended up in the top half of the rankings, but I could not make myself be motivated solely by money. I certainly could not buy into the suggestion that a husband and father's worth was measured in dollars over quality time. There had to be more purpose to my life than helping people work towards financial goals. After spending two years establishing my business, I found myself becoming a feminist activist in my spare time, eventually starting my own nonprofit to encourage young women to run for political office. Perhaps

the call to advocate for women was one way I stayed connected to my feminine. My career was dominated by masculine values and I worked with mostly men, and the world of feminism was full of opportunities to connect with wise older women and feisty younger women who were inspired by higher principles. Was it the anima in these women that connected with my anima? As I reflect about this time, my activism seemed to take a very masculine form as theory and rational efforts to impact legislation. I was advocating for women's equality but not coming into relationship with myself as a woman. It is interesting to think about this now. For example, my annoyance with women that embraced attributes and paths I perceived to work against breaking through limiting beliefs about women caused me to distance myself from my own feminine. Even though I fought for women in general to decide their own destiny, I found myself enticed even more intensely by the masculine as carried by men. Overall, I preferred the company of men professionally, intellectually, and casually. It was a certain kind of man whose energy attracted me, men whose energy seemed to represent attempts at breaking through limiting notions of what it meant to be a woman or a man. Or maybe it was energy that expressed an appreciation for me that went beyond sexual desire. There was a sexual energy, but it did not manifest in most cases as desire for sex, rather the sexual energy occurred because of connection in the form of friendship, common interests, and conversations that were not possible with other people in my life. This energy felt intensely erotic and arousing, but it did not manifest as a desire to have sex with the other person.

Summary

In this chapter I explored how my individuation journey has been shaped by a complex relationship between my sexuality and spirituality within the context of the Jungian theory of individuation. I appreciate that a woman's individuation journey may look different than that of a man, but what seems more probable is that both men and women's individuation journeys require both a Hero's journey for the masculine and Heroine's journey for the feminine. I found a complex dynamic at work in how my sexual and spiritual wounds became intertwined. In fact, given that what could be considered women's wounds of sexuality and spirituality are so intertwined, it would make sense that as a woman comes into deeper relationship with one of these wounds, there might be a parallel healing in the other wound. This was true for me. It was the foundational work with my personal complexes that made it possible for the archetypal energies of sexuality and spirituality to express themselves through me as a vessel, taking my attention beyond my personal experience.

In the next chapter I explore additional concepts related to individuation theory, including complexes, archetypes, and some Greek Gods and Goddesses that seem to have been present during my journey, for example Hermes as Trickster, Guide, and Protector, and psychological type.

Chapter 5

Individuation Part Two

In this chapter, I continue exploring how my individuation journey has been shaped by a complex relationship between my sexuality and spirituality within the context of the Jungian theory of individuation. I begin by considering in hindsight how personal complexes began breaking through into consciousness, beginning with my mother complex, and how coming into healthy relationship with certain shadow pieces provided just the opening needed by the archetypal energies of sexuality and spirituality to sweep me up into a life-changing relationship. In addition, I explore how only Hermes as Trickster could loosen my ego enough to be receptive to such a significant transformative experience, an experience that required intense vulnerability on my part. Finally, I explore the possibility that my psychological type of INFJ (introverted, intuitive, feeling, judge) may contribute to my particular receptivity to archetypal energies being expressed through me.

Complexes as the Doorway to the Archetypes

Even before I acquired the framework of depth psychology, I experienced a moment of awareness from my unconscious breaking through into consciousness, reflecting Shalit's (2002) suggestion that the unconscious approaches us through complexes. What I recognized at the time was that I had an irrational response to a stimulus, which I tried to get rid of with a little EMDR therapy, an approach for the rapid treatment of trauma (Shapiro, 2007). This might have been the first eruption into consciousness of a complex, and even though I did not know about complex theory I believe I intuitively understood it. This event coincided with the events I previously

outlined having to do with the beginning of the end of my marriage and answering of the call to study depth psychology. I was working with a consulting client that I had nicknamed *Napoleon* because his reason for dismissing my advice to cultivate relationships with the community surrounding the school he ran was “Napoleon did not ask anyone for input.” After a particular phone call with this man, I had this sudden awareness that what I felt during our interactions mirrored the inadequacy I felt growing up. The insight was so powerful, that I said aloud after this defining phone call, *He is my mother!* That eruption from my unconscious led to a realization that I consistently avoided answering the phone if I did not know who was calling. What disturbed me more was that if I recognized the number as belonging to one of my clients, I immediately felt anxiety because I feared I had done something wrong. After the EMDR therapy session, I employed an affirmation meant to train myself to respond to this stimulus in a new way, but what I would later understand as my mother complex would soon manifest in a new way.

About this time, my mother had an episode with her health that involved my witnessing her inability to breathe for several minutes. After her trip to the emergency room, one of my sisters and I felt an eruption of anger at her lack of responsibility for her health. I think we felt the impending doom of our needing to care for her. The anger was so intense that we sought the assistance of the same therapist that facilitated my EMDR therapy session. At the same time my sister and I decided to intentionally spend time with my mother discussing whatever it was she might want to discuss about her past. I found myself so overwhelmed and triggered by her stories of being mistreated by men that I cried and told my sister I could not handle it. Also, at about this time, after being thrilled

at my mother's agreement to attend therapy with us to work through this anger issue, I came face to face with perhaps the core of my mother complex.

During the one therapy session my sisters (one by phone) and I had with my mother, my mother looked at me and then turned to the therapist and said *She doesn't think I'm a good mother*. I felt helpless, and the therapist came to my rescue by telling my mother that often people (referring to my mother) who have been through a lot are not able to receive love from others (referring to me). I felt as though my mother had stated a truth and at the same time I could feel her sense of ultimate worth hinging upon my validation of her as a parent still after all these years. It did not feel fair, and I felt the familiar feeling of having to be my own parent and be responsible for the self-worth of the one person who was supposed to contribute to my own sense of self-worth.

For some reason around this time I happened to attend what was referred to as a past life regression activity, which I attended with both skepticism and openness. The APA (American Psychological Association) *Dictionary of Psychology* defines this activity as using hypnosis to recall a previous life, but for me this experience felt more like active imagination. In *Jung on Active Imagination* (1997), Joan Chodorow offers a helpful description of how C. G. Jung developed his ideas on active imagination. Broadly speaking, active imagination involves communicating with the content of one's unconscious, something that is critical to gaining self-knowledge, which in turn contributes to the process of individuation. I appreciate Chodorow's suggestion that "In the deepest sense, active imagination is the essential, inner-directed symbolic attitude that is at the core of psychological development" (p. 17). During this exercise, I was surprised at the spontaneous images that emerged from my unconscious. Upon being led back

through time into my mother's womb, I felt as though I was suffocating. I later came to identify a complex that I refer to as *my being trapped complex* or *my prison complex*. The suffocation in my mother's womb had to do with her projecting onto me the responsibility to confirm she was indeed a better mother than her mother.

This realization was liberating in two ways. The weekend before my mother passed away, I happened to share my insight with her. When I told her that I felt the burden of proving she was a better mother than her own, she smiled and said, "That's what Dr. Phil would say." I know this was her way of acknowledging the complexity of our relationship and my suffering. My mother passed away less than a week later. The second reason this image became liberating for me is it helped me make sense of two parallel sets of tendencies. The first is my need to have an escape path wherever I go. From needing to sit on the aisle in a movie theatre or on a plane, to feeling anxiety when I work as an employee as opposed to an independent contractor, I now just accept this need and embrace it as I design my life. The behaviors that run parallel to these more defensive or protective behaviors are those related to my seeking out small, cozy, and intimate settings. From sitting in the same seat at my small local movie theatre, to referring to my backyard as a sanctuary, to finding small bar/restaurants in which to become a regular, I believe that I may be attempting to recreate my experience in the womb as one that feels comfortable instead of suffocating. What brought this insight to the surface was an activity I participated in during a residential visit at Pacifica Graduate Institute. During a walkabout, I was drawn into a kiva, a small mostly underground cave formation, which elicited tears from me. After drawing the image in my journal, I wrote this Haiku:

Oh Pacifica

A womb of the Great Mother

A new child born

As the past-life regression continued, and I imagined my past life before the womb, I opened and walked through a huge wooden door and emerged in what seemed like ancient Greece. I was dressed in a beautiful blue flowing luxurious gown, and as people gathered around me, I felt as though they were waiting for some words of wisdom from me. I felt overwhelmed and burdened because I did not know what to do or say.

Over time I came to understand that not only did I feel imprisoned by my mother's projection onto me of the responsibility to prove she was a better mother than her mother, but that I also carry an ancestral wound when it comes to the relations between a man and a woman. Shalit (2002) reminds us of Jung's suggestion that the complex is the road to the unconscious and that the Self seeks to help us find the personal and archetypal meaning of the complex through images such as those that show up in dreams (p. 7).

Following this activity, I became more curious about my attraction to images of old doors. The blown-up photo of a beautiful door belonging to a building in Barcelona, Spain that is hundreds of years old, has hung above my fireplace for years (See Appendix A). I had been aware that I was drawn to doors, but I was at a loss as to why. I wondered whether the door image was being presented to me as an invitation to something unknown or whether it represented something that was being closed to me. In hindsight I would say it acted as both invitation and barrier, and that it would be up to me to manage the tension between being in front of a closed door and walking through it. If Galten (2019) is correct in saying Jung suggested that the Self is not just part of our psyche, but

that the Self is us, then my sense is that I am both the one standing before the closed door and the one behind the door. It is as if the individuation process is simply but gradually erasing the separation that exists within me and with everything.

This insight emerged after integrating two active imagination activities. The first was a drawing with me represented as a flower in the center. I spontaneously drew images that represented a part of my ancestry as suns and moons. The three large sun images, which I labeled, Mom, Grandma, and Great-Grandma, dwarfed the multiple moons that I labeled as *no father* or *bad father*, referring to the men that were not present for my mother (her father) or her mother and her mother's mother (husbands), as well as my father and stepfather. The final two moons represented my father and stepfather. I am not sure why I drew the women of the family as sun images, except that their presence in life and death felt so dominant, and the good men that eventually presented themselves in my mother's life seemed eclipsed by the cumulative dominant energy of the women in my mother's ancestry. With poverty, abuse, and absent fathers as major reference points, it makes sense that a woman whose desire to do better as a mother might not be able to transcend such a deep-seated pattern of relationship dysfunction. Without men, the stressed women in my mother's, father's and stepfather's ancestry manifested as abuse and meanness, and without a model of healthy relationship, the abuse that might have understandably occurred perhaps was internalized as a sense of failure as a mother. This realization led to finding meaning in how I showed up in my own marriage, attempting to be a nicer wife than my mother was.

The other active imagination activity that helped me connect my personal and ancestral wounds to the archetypal was a two-part dream council. Author and clinical

psychologist Stephen Aizenstat (2011) in his book *Dream Tending: Awakening to the Healing Power of Dreams*, suggests that this ritual can act as a bridge between the worlds of waking life and dreams as you develop an ongoing relationship with certain images (people, animals, things) that are represented by physical objects (p. 231). During one Dream Council activity, I invited someone to represent my ancestors, not knowing whom in particular to invite. A couple who looked to be in their thirties and with tanned skin, came forward, she dressed similarly to me in my past life regression that I believe took me to Greece. When I asked why they came, they did not say anything. I invited them back to another Dream Council, and this time they shared: *Something has been stolen from our family—the love between a man and a woman.* I began to understand that my personal experience of love and relationship was not mine alone, and that there was more work to do that went beyond healing my own personal wound.

Over time, I began to appreciate that the ultimate purpose of my mother complex erupting into my life went beyond figuring out why my marriage fell apart. Working to discover the personal meaning of my complex led to an appreciation of the potentially deeper archetypal meaning having to do with the love between a man and a woman in general. As Shalit (2002) suggests, “The fundamental task of the complex is to serve as vehicle and vessel of transformation, whereby the archetypal essence is brought into living reality” (p. 68). This is a beautiful way of saying that our unique experience of life has meaning that goes beyond our personal experience. Without the framework of depth psychology, I might not have been able to come into relationship with my mother complex, which is the wound that both causes my suffering and is the source of what I am beginning to understand as my gifts.

The journey to relate to my mother complex required both a hero's journey and a heroine's journey. The difference between these two journeys is articulated by Murdock (1990) as a journey to slay the dragons represented by our complexes so we may serve others versus the journey to come into deeper relationship with self and others. I appreciate the distinction between a hero and heroine's journey. I also appreciate the possibility that both of these journeys are important to the capacity to achieve a kind of balance of feminine and masculine energies in an individual. In fact, I have come to believe that in order for one to truly achieve wholeness and for a society to become more balanced in its valuing of the feminine and masculine, the feminine and masculine within each of us needs to take a journey, a different kind of journey. Whereas Murray Stein's presentation of individuation theory feels somewhat balanced, it may not adequately capture the importance of coming into relationship with the body and sexuality. The masculine hero's journey ultimately is about offering one's wisdom to the external world and feels spirit oriented, and Murdock's feminine heroine's journey is about circling back to intimate relationships. I wonder if there is a third journey that has to do with the increase in consciousness that comes from pure being as a merging with everything. This journey would be the journey to reconcile spirit with matter through the body and sexuality.

Placing my experience with my father and stepfather within the context of the father complex has been difficult. As I mentioned above, all of my parents encouraged and assured me that I could achieve anything to which I set my mind. The wound my mother left me with did not have as much to do with changing roles for women as with the fact that she developed a very authoritarian parenting style due to the stress of

poverty, alcoholism, abuse, and growing up with one parent. The wound my father and stepfather left me with could relate to a feeling of abandonment because they did not protect me from my mother, although abandonment seems too strong. My father and stepfather were around and were encouraging, but they were passive bystanders.

Murdock (1990) suggests that when fathers are not strongly present, the daughters' animus will drive them to be overly ambitious in the masculine world in hopes of pleasing their fathers, and this drive to please may manifest in seeking approval from other men in various ways, including through sexuality. For some reason, I had assumed my shame regarding my sexual encounters previous to meeting my now ex-husband had to do with my father complex. I am no longer sure about this.

Personal to Collective

Each day I wonder about the meaning of my first post-divorce relationship with Phillip that started by sweeping me up and being a safe space for me to reconnect with my feminine, my body, and sexuality, which led to the prompting of exploring my relationship with God. The clarity of when the relationship had served its purpose was striking, and I interpreted the dramatic ending as necessary to prevent me from continuing on my path of over adapting to the needs of Phillip. The fear and anger that had been tucked away when I detached from the feminist movement because it was driven so much by anger, re-emerged in conversations with Phillip towards the end of the relationship. This time I was conscious and courageous enough to face these emotions and consider their source. I came to understand that the fear that has been triggered in the past by a more fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible has something to do with the collective fear that women carry as a result of real violence and atrocities done to them

over centuries of oppression by patriarchy and endorsed by patriarchal religion – not Jesus.

In their book *The Cultural Complex: Contemporary Jungian Perspectives on Psyche and Society* (2004), Jungian analysts Samuel Kimbles and Thomas Singer extend C. G. Jung's theory of complexes to groups. Complexes are patterns of thinking and behaving that form over time as a result of an accumulation of experiences, including trauma, and they become activated through interactions. They become negative when a triggering event causes an individual to get swept up emotionally in a way that reinforces a sense of righteousness or inferiority (Weisstub, E. & Galili-Weisstub, E., pp. 159-160). These authors suggest that because individual psyches also are formed by identification with a group, and a group's patterns of behaving and thinking are based on a gradual accumulation of events, memories, and traumatic events, the individual may be swept up in what feels like a complex that does not reflect the individual's personal experience (p. 161). In this case an individual is unable to see clearly an event or another person onto which they are projecting the cultural complex because personal experience has been overtaken by the group complex. I appreciate the authors' declaration that "none of us are free to step completely outside this river of collective experience" (p. 162).

I am still unsure of exactly which part of the anger that sometimes is triggered is because of a personal complex or cultural complex. Perhaps it is a little of both, but since I have never been physically threatened for my beliefs, my reaction might be rooted in a cultural complex having to do with women's oppression especially by patriarchal religion. As much as I try to attempt to engage in conversation with someone who holds what I perceive to be a sexist belief, anger and fear spontaneously flood my body. Even

today as I tell myself there is no way that women will lose the right to birth control, my body feels real fear at the image of myself losing my dignity. Margaret Atwood's (1986) book *The Handmaid's Tale* feels unbelievable and believable at the same time. Her quote "Men are afraid that women will laugh at them. Women are afraid that men will kill them" eerily captures the fear that is elicited by simply being part of a group called *women*. As I began to discover that most of my fear belongs to this cultural complex, I grew in my capacity to disarm my fear in order to explore what could be fear in the person holding the sexist belief. As I am able to bring more neutrality to the encounter, I am able to transform the fear and anger into empathy for someone with such great insecurity that they must live with the fantasy of oppressing others. Instead, what emerged was an insight having to do with the desperation of some people to have a rigid framework with which to navigate life and when that framework is threatened they have no choice but to dig in and prove they are right. I realized that has nothing to do with me, which caused me to let go of my resistance, and that resulted in an immediate lessening of my connection with Phillip.

The psychic energy that had previously been trapped in a mutual complex was released now as if a spell was broken. His pulling back had become matched with my pulling back. Phillip became a human being who was released from my projection onto him of my apparent fantasy of Christianity's redemption. I had been aware along the way that I was likely projecting something onto him and our relationship, and I did experience him as a kind of bridge to the Divine, but I unfairly gave him a burden that was not his to carry. The working out of these complexes made it clear that we each had a fantasy, mine

having to do with interfaith dialogue and his having to do with my conversion. What else explains the irony behind our dramatic connection?

Coming into relationship with my feminine oddly has increased my sense of empathy for men. When I reflect about the source of fear and anger that remain in my shadow, it is difficult to determine how much of it has to do with personal events and how much of it is collective. My intuition tells me that the majority of my anger has to do with the collective experience of women over centuries and manifests as a kind of automatic defensiveness in certain situations. This means that I am projecting old pain and anger onto current situations, decreasing my capacity to see clearly. I am not the only one doing this as reflected in all sorts of current events that have brought these wounds to the surface in the collective. The #MeToo movement felt empowering for women as powerful men began to be held accountable for years of sexual harassment of and sexual violence against women. On the other hand, the 2019 hearing for U.S. Supreme Court justice felt like a replay of that of Justice Clarence Thomas in that it was a reminder of how women's stories are still easily dismissed, trivialized, or seen as vengeful. There seems to be more division between men and women than ever before at the mass media level. It is unclear though whether individuals are finding a way to transcend this division.

A presentation in 2019 of my thoughts about the collective wounds that both men and women carry that prevent deep connection was enthusiastically received, as the participants were able to hold the tension between honoring and healing their personal wounds and having empathy for the wounds that men carry too as a result of patriarchy. I feel that I have been able to heal much of the personal wounding that has to do with men.

It is the larger system of beliefs that persist that I have turned my attention to, and perhaps because they feel so gigantic they still elicit fear and anger from my shadow. It has been my capacity to reconnect with my feminine and bring it into better partnership with my masculine that fuels my passion for bringing meaningful conversation out into the world about reconciliation between the genders through reconciliation within oneself.

Hermes as Messenger, Trickster, and Protector

Recognizing the presence of Hermes, the mythic Greek God who was considered to be the guide of souls, started to become a game for me, as I began to see daily ironies, obsessions, and preoccupations as clues to something. It began to feel as if I was a real life motion picture film or novel with a mystery to be solved. Sometimes I felt I won the game that day and laughed and other days I cried or exploded with frustration at my inability to find the meaning in an event. For example, three months before the end of the period of separation from Phillip, I fell down the steps in my house during the night. I was carrying my dog down to his kennel because he was not letting me sleep. I also happened to be naked. Angrily, I got to the bottom of the steps, somehow missed the last step, and *splat!* Onto the floor my naked body fell. The dog was fine but worried about me. I hurt my ankle but not bad enough as I laughed, looked up and shouted, *What? Do you want me to slow down? Am I missing a step? Am I overstepping?* I thought I had learned the lesson, but two weeks later, I repeated the event in exactly the same way at the same time, although this time I had pajamas on and there was no dog. Clearly I had not learned my lesson as this time I injured the same ankle badly enough to require a trip to the emergency room, crutches, and a black and blue foot for four weeks. Besides howling in pain, I looked up once again and asked *What are you trying to tell me?* I am

not sure I have figured out what Hermes was trying to tell me through those events, but I suspect it was a warning related to my relationship with Phillip and his moving in with me.

Murray Stein, Jungian analyst and author of *In Midlife* (1983), suggests that once one has reached the part of the midlife journey characterized by the space between what has been shed in the form of attachments to a fixed identify and what has yet to unfold in the form of a new approach to life, Hermes is present (p. 8). It is the capacity to exist in this liminal space that allows one to receive what the unconscious has to offer in the form of things forgotten and repressed that are now calling for attention because of the one-sidedness of conscious living. It only took one month after I asked Phillip to leave for me to realize that I was still in transition when it came to how I showed up in relationship to a man. I had experienced relationship in a new way with this man, but I had also once again compromised myself by over adapting to his needs.

If one of the roles Hermes plays is tricking one into facing something that had been hiding stubbornly in the shadow, another role is that of messenger who brings a little guidance about what to do after facing a terrible truth. This guidance may come in the form of a synchronistic event or image. One of the ways Jung (1968/2010) described what allows for a synchronistic event is one's unconscious openness to witnessing a miracle, emphasis being on the unconscious (p. 25, para. 848). There does not seem to be a requirement that one consciously be receptive to synchronistic events; the unconscious seems to know when there is a tiny crack through which a message may enter. However, consciousness is required to reflect about the meaning in a way that helps one develop in a meaningful way. There seems to be a space that opens up when one finally surrenders

to whatever awful truth one has not been able to face, and this “narrowing of consciousness and a corresponding strengthening of the unconscious” (p. 30, para. 856) creates a doorway for the synchronicity. Jung describes a synchronicity as the simultaneous occurrence of an image emerging out of the unconscious and an external event that cannot be explained as either causing the other. The coming together of the inner psychic state and the outer event becomes personally meaningful (p. 31, para. 856). The heightened emotional state of the individual experiencing the synchronicity is testament to the mysterious and inexplicable coincidence of the inner state and outer event (p. 30, para. 856).

Hermes as messenger may have tried to get my attention in that moment where I realized at age 38 a piece of me had died, but I did not yet have the capacity to exist in the liminal space that is part of the conscious journey of individuation. The message though, which came in the form of a moment of presence as I noticed the sunshine attempting to get through to me, was subtle but brought an important new insight. Hermes as Trickster likely orchestrated the two more dramatic events that occurred ten years later. The first was the falling apart of my business, the circumstances so odd that I went to see a transformation coach to become enlightened about my role in the debacle. The week of my appointment coincided with two events having to do with my son and now ex-husband that were so dramatic something new broke into consciousness. I suddenly realized that the purpose of my business falling apart was to bring my attention to my most intimate relationships. The second event came in the form of my embodied reaction to seeing the logo of Pacifica Graduate Institute. I came to see attending Pacifica as a kind of mandate for my life no matter the unknown personal or financial

consequences. My ego, denial, and masculine were so entrenched that something drastic had to present itself for me to break free from my illusion that I was holding everything together.

In *Synchronicity: Through the Eyes of Science, Myth, and the Trickster* (Combs & Holland, 1996/2001), the authors suggest synchronistic events are related to times of transition (p. 84). The synchronicity exists on a boundary or a threshold between one thing and another, especially between the unconscious and the conscious life of the individual. The authors refer to synchronistic events as gifts that are available to anyone, but they admit that people are more open to them when their usual reliance on a conscious approach fails. Hermes as messenger has offered me many gifts of synchronicity over the years. Sometimes I was able to recognize an event as synchronistic but I did not have the capacity to necessarily discern the true meaning. When I consider what I remember to be the first meaningful synchronicity of midlife, it is as though the sunshine had been working to get my attention and finally found a way to reach me as it peered through a small space in between some fluttering leaves. It is clear now that something was trying to erupt into my consciousness. I am not sure what made me look up, but the sight was striking and so was the realization that my life had become something that caused me to feel sad. Perhaps that was the only thing Hermes thought I was ready for, and he was successful in getting the message across that my soul was suffering. Because I lacked the capacity to reflect about the event in a more symbolic manner, it did not seem to offer me guidance on what to do next.

The distinction between one's unconscious being ready for the miracle and one's capacity to consciously wrestle with how the event may also be offering a solution seems

important. The next major synchronicity that occurred seemed to offer me a solution to some problem that had yet to become conscious. The certainty that I felt about answering this call to study depth psychology was something I had never felt before. Two years would pass before I would begin to find meaning in both of these synchronicities. In the initial synchronicity at age 38, I was aware there was meaning but I did not know what it was. The truth that seemed to emerge was simply that I was not living a full life. The second synchronicity, which occurred at about age 48 was felt as a solution to a problem that had yet to be formally understood. Perhaps Hermes was getting impatient with me. My reaction to this second event was both strongly emotional and immediate.

Not until this analysis did I reflect on what exactly was going on in my life that opened the doorway in order for Hermes' gift in the form of a solution to be offered. Earlier in the day when I saw the ad for Pacifica Graduate Institute, I recall a semi-conscious feeling that my family life was in a very precarious state. There must have been a kind of unconscious surrender to what I did not want to face, which was that I could not fix my family situation by managing everyone's emotions. Our family embarked on a short walk to our little suburban main street, and a few blocks into our walk it began to rain. Given the warm summer temperature, I was excited to get caught in the rain, but my now ex-husband was not in sync with my romantic view of the situation. Playing what I perceived to be my usual role of fixer, I became animated as I tried to get everyone to embrace the moment, but the exhausting uphill battle felt like *déjà vu*. Once we got to the main street, we walked into an old pharmacy and my attention immediately gravitated to the magazine rack, specifically an issue of *Yoga Journal*. The rain stopped and we walked home. That night in the privacy of the bathroom, I paged through the

magazine and gasped when I beheld the Pacifica Graduate Institute ad for its M.A./Ph.D. program in depth psychology. I was conscious of the image's impact on me and during the next couple weeks of research, I came to understand that the condition of my soul depended on my pursuing this program. At the time, I did not know studying depth psychology was somehow intertwined with the process of ending my marriage; I just knew that this was that moment others talk about, the moment that you know is going to change your life. During the process of writing this analysis, I chuckled at the realization that the Pacifica Graduate Institute logo, which was found inside a magazine purchased at an old-fashioned pharmacy, was the prescription for the medicine that would put me on the path to recovery from what ailed me.

As I analyze my personal experience with synchronicity, there seems to be an opportunity to do a better job of helping people to understand what it feels like to be presented with this gift. Just as the authors of *The Experience of Introversion: An Integration of Phenomenological, Empirical, and Jungian Approaches* (Shapiro, K. J. & Alexander, I. E., 1975) attempted to explore how introversion is experienced by an individual, I am finding that an intellectual understanding of Jung's writings on synchronicity feels incomplete. Now I see potential synchronistic images, events, and encounters on a daily basis, and the attunement to my body and emotions helps me determine whether there is something meaningful going on. Only through reflection, working with dreams, image drawing, and active imagination activities am I able to discover the advice hidden within the experience. Many of Hermes' messages to me are delivered via films, popular music, encounters with people, especially, and during walks in nature. I will talk about my heightened sensitivity to film images in Chapter 7.

There were two subsequent synchronistic events that bracket the most significant part of my midlife individuation journey thus far, specifically reconnecting with my body and sexuality in a way that became intertwined with my spiritual journey. This third significant synchronicity was even stronger, which is perhaps a reflection of my growing openness to Hermes' gifts. My being swept up into what became an intense first post-divorce romantic relationship with Phillip seems to be in alignment with Stein's (1983) suggestion that midlife individuation has to do with encountering and coming into relationship with one's anima or animus, the intensity of which can feel god-like, and is essentially a religious struggle (p. 105). It became clear to me that Hermes orchestrated two subsequent synchronistic events of equal intensity. Hermes sent this man to me and also made it clear when it was time for him to go. Developing a healthier relationship with my feminine, body, sexuality, and Divine had potentially prepared me for the next leg of my journey.

Being conscious during the process of individuation does not mean being able to escape the surprising and dramatic events that occur as part of the process. My ego feels the need to be as prepared as possible for what might happen next, which perhaps is why I feel compelled to find meaning in the smallest things on a daily basis. The best I can do is take a deep breath and then reflect about what lesson I am to learn. Whereas I knew that my relationship with Phillip had some ultimate mysterious meaning of which I was unaware, I still felt as if I came out of a spell or woke up from a dream when the beginning of the end presented itself. A significant and sudden shift occurred within me quickly as I resisted fighting the shift away from me that I felt from him. Over the next couple days I felt empowered to establish a clear boundary with Phillip that had to do

with respect for our differing views and a declaration that my personal journey with God was mine alone. This line in the sand caused a further pulling away by Phillip, but it was now matched by my pulling back. I became less dependent on him emotionally and back on track with my spiritual journey. Suddenly, I was released by the need to listen to my Bible app on my phone, and to spend three hours at church every Sunday, and I asked myself why again had I felt that I had to prove that Christianity just does not match up with my personal experience of God. Perhaps what Hermes did was take me down into my shadow and release my Madwoman, the part of me that can override the voice that tells me I have to live up to someone else's standards. In *Meeting the Madwoman: An Inner Challenge for Feminine Spirit* (1993/1994), Jungian analyst and philosopher Linda Leonard suggests that an inner rage lives within the shadows of many women who have not felt permission to feel or have been in denial of this potentially destructive or creative force. In my twenties, I was well aware of how feminist anger could be harnessed in a way that led to improvements in policies that positively impacted women's lives. Eventually though, being motivated by anger exhausted me and I began to focus on living and leading by example and working on having empathy for the unconscious motivations behind people's sexist or racist views, assuming that motivation had something to do with scarcity. Perhaps I became too one-sided in my tolerance for others, and the inner rage at feeling trapped had to eventually explode into consciousness. For my romantic partner to dismiss out of hand my understanding of my calling and relationship with God perhaps was just too much for me. My inner madwoman set me free.

Sexual Healing

The moment I released myself from the story about my sexuality that was driven by finding what went wrong in my childhood, something was released into my consciousness having to do with a possible myth that is living through me. The Myth of the Sacred Prostitute had captured my attention because it helped explain my conscious need to reconcile sexuality and spirituality. I felt validated and empowered by the knowledge that women's bodies had at one time been seen as a bridge to the Divine and that women were revered as the initiators of the sexual ritual, its purpose to ensure the presence of love as a creative and unifying force in human experience. Jungian analyst, Nancy Qualls-Corbett (1988), author of *The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspect of the Feminine*, suggests that the sense of emptiness that so many people feel might be explained by a loss of connection to those life-giving forces that bring sexuality and spirituality together, this being represented by the Goddess (p. 13). There seems to be much discussion about the need to unite mind, body, and soul, but the split between spirituality and sexuality seems to be a stubborn one in a society where masculine values still dominate.

Perhaps my feminine intuition knew how this myth related to my life in a way my masculine intellect could not articulate. I felt embarrassed at the thought that I might have been playing the role of initiator of men into the sexual and spiritual mysteries of the Goddess. I was not confident nor did I feel empowered in my sexuality, and in most cases my sexual experiences left me feeling shame. On the other hand, it could be that the archetype was seeking expression through me nonetheless. Twenty-five years after my encounter with Tom, my college attraction, we each hold very different impressions of

our relationship back then. I cannot remember most of the relationship, but Tom described me as having had the presence of a Goddess, the energy of a free spirit, and being mesmerized by my dancing. At the same time I experienced being embarrassed by and judged for my sexual desire, he admits that I helped him resolve many sexual issues for him due to his religious upbringing. He described moments where he felt I saw into his soul and at times he would get a glimpse into mine. He shared that it was feeling overwhelmed by his feelings and perceived inadequacies that led to the end of the relationship, but that our encounter had a lasting impact on him.

As I reflect on the many friendships I have and have always had with men of a very wide age range, both my sexual energy and energetic spirit and demeanor I believe have always played a role in the connection. What seems interesting now is that in many cases at some point during our dialogue the man will ask about or observe my spiritual nature. This causes me to suggest that not only is sexuality not always about the literal sexual act, but that feminine sexuality can work to initiate another into a more general feeling of love and union. I believe there is another way this myth might have been living through me. In my relationship with Phillip, I perhaps played the role of the male stranger who needed to be initiated. Could it be that the feminine in Phillip played the role of initiator? All along, I have been suggesting that it has been the feminine in this man that helped me reconnect with my own feminine. Phillip was particularly at ease with his feminine and sexuality, although his rigid religious beliefs forced him to carry much guilt and keep his desires in his shadow for the most part. They came out in full force when he was under the influence of alcohol, and maybe this is the reason for the intensity of his desires and their need to be projected onto someone.

Qualls-Corbett (1988) suggests a consequence of patriarchy has been women's loss of identity as virginal, meaning woman as existing in relationship only to herself and not in relationship to man (p. 118). I take this to mean that women have not been free to acknowledge their sexuality as complete and not needing expression through a partner in a formal way. Until recently, I had not experienced my sexuality as a natural and healthy part of my identity; rather, I felt overwhelmed and embarrassed by my arousal and desire to be sexual. Further, I had not experienced sexuality in a way that did not include some expected outcome, such as orgasm. One exception is the intense feeling of empowerment I experienced during college when I discovered how to orgasm on my own. It was as if I discovered a secret treasure and could not stop touching it. I found myself running to the bathroom in between college classes to experience another orgasm. If I had honored my own natural sexuality, I may also have possibly been able to connect to the Divine.

I appreciate Qualls-Corbett's (1988) distinction between the immature woman who seeks to have love serve her versus the mature woman who seeks to serve the goddess of love. Even as I continued to process emotionally the end of my relationship with Phillip, I could tease apart two different experiences in the same relationship. The first reflects what Qualls-Corbett (1988) calls the immature expectation that the love I received from this man was for me, and the second the more powerful experience of honoring the Goddess (p. 119). Ironically, opening up to receiving love from this man led to my capacity to give, and what followed was an experience of merging with Phillip and with everything. "The stranger too is transformed. . . . The qualities of the receptive feminine nature, so opposite from his own, are embedded deep within his soul" (p. 23). Five weeks following the end of our relationship, this myth contributed to my capacity to

identify the two separate experiences running through the relationship. The first had to do with the pain of being rejected, and the second had to do with the more powerful experience of connecting with the Divine and merging with everything. “He makes no specific claims on the woman herself, but carries her image, the personification of love and sexual joy, into the world” (p. 23).

In the myth, it is the maiden woman who specifically initiates the male stranger into the mysteries of love. Because patriarchy has taken from women what seems to at one time have been a natural role, today’s women may not see their sexuality as the doorway to experiencing union with the Divine. I do not believe that Phillip was the initiator of my connection to the Divine through sexuality, rather an unsuspecting vessel through which the Goddess could connect with me. With a unique relationship to creating life, women may still play an equally unique role in initiating men to the Goddess of love through sexuality, but in today’s society they are not usually conscious about this role. Consequently, the archetype has had to find creative ways to express itself. It might be that I was not able to embrace my potential role as Sacred Prostitute consciously either literally or metaphorically early on, but she continued to have a presence in my psyche.

I find Qualls-Corbett’s (1988) description of the components of this myth helpful, because I can imagine them as characters and scenes that play out in my psychological journey. Above, I have described myself both as the sacred prostitute and the stranger. Lacking connection to my own feminine, the Goddess was unable to move through me as the initiator, but in midlife perhaps my playing the role of stranger, as the feminine in Phillip played the Goddess, I was able to experience the mystery of sexuality as union with the Divine. Qualls-Corbett refers to the work of Ulanov (1971), who suggests that it

is the feminine principle that completes the journey to wholeness. Whereas the feminine principle in man is considered to be the anima, in woman it is her feminine self (Qualls-Corbett, 1988, p. 56). This is curious because after perhaps having my feminine weakened and put into the background as I became one-sidedly masculine, she seemed to become awakened through relationship. It was not the masculine within me, or my animus, that developed, but my feminine seemed to develop through connection with Phillip's feminine. It is as if the sacred prostitute was played by the role of a literal male. Further I wonder about Phillip's own individuation journey, because his rigid religious beliefs, which forced his intense and natural need for affection and desire into his shadow, seemed to have made him an easy vessel through which the Goddess could connect with me. As I took a breath and began to heal from the ending of this intense relationship, I sought to prepare myself for the next leg of the journey, which may be to be a bridge to the "moving, transforming, mystical power of love which unites the human element with the Divine" (p. 158).

Psychological Type

In this research I am attempting to explore the possibility that my experience of sexuality has not only been closely connected to my experience of spirituality, but that this specific connection has been the driving force of the unfolding of my life and my individuation journey. Specifically, I am wondering if it has been through sexuality that my spiritual journey has occurred. Jung's theory of psychological type is helpful in articulating why this may be true for me personally as well as supportive of my suggestion that my experience may be part of something that is emerging from the collective unconscious and possibly present in the experience of other women. I

appreciate Jung's (1921/1971) suggestion that what are perceived to be the biggest challenges are always connected with the archetypes, which exist in the collective unconscious, and that the images from the collective unconscious emerge as opportunities to continue to relate to these challenges over time (p. 220, para. 373).

Ideas about sexuality and spirituality seem to be particularly challenging today, as reflected by intense division and violence. If my experiences have resulted from my capacity to access the archetypes, this offers me an opportunity to not only reconcile sexuality and spirituality personally but also my experience is likely to be shared by others and reflect an opportunity for a new collective valuing of the connection between sexuality and spirituality. Jung warns though that this kind of transcendence in collective ideas can only happen through conscious reflection (Jung, 1921/1971, p. 221, para. 374). I take this to mean that accessing the archetypes is what gives rise to the potential for a new manifestation of the archetype and that it is conscious reflection about the emergence of the archetype that determines whether the expression of the archetype acts as a healthy compensation or is another form of one-sidedness. If this is true then it is important to consider what role psychological type plays in one's experience of individuation.

In Jung's *General Description of the Types* (1921/1971), what begins as a seemingly straightforward description of his theory quickly becomes complex as he attempts to illustrate how the theory is observed through behaviors. Briefly, Jung's theory of types includes what he calls two possible attitudes having to do with one's tendency towards prioritizing the object or one's inner experience of the object. He named these two attitudes introversion and extraversion. Beyond these two basic types, he suggested

that people had a preference when it came to perceiving information either through the senses or a more mysterious way of knowing that he named intuition. Finally, Jung suggested that individuals also exhibited a preference in how they made decisions about what they perceived via the function of thinking or feeling. What complicates matters is that whereas people seem to have innate tendencies that can be identified as a specific type, one's natural type can be frustrated when it is not allowed to be expressed, whether during childhood within a family or generally in a society or culture that values one type over another (p. 332, para. 560).

Another complication is that in order to develop into a balanced individual and fully functioning member of society, one must develop an appreciation for those of the other attitude as well as the capacity to use the functions that do not come naturally. For example, as an introvert, an object, person, or experience is less interesting for me than my experience of experiencing that object, person, or experience. Without appreciating the excitement that an extraverted friend or partner has for the actual object, my capacity to connect with this person may be difficult. Further, as an intuitive person, I may be able to know a higher principle, but if I cannot communicate this principle in a way that a person who knows through the senses can understand, I may not be able to influence others towards positive change. Jung also suggested that one's conscious attitude of extraversion or introversion is compensated by its opposite attitude in the unconscious, and the more extreme one's conscious attitude, the more disruptive the unconscious attitude, erupting into consciousness in the form of exaggerated and primitive expressions and behaviors (Jung, 1921/1971, p. 338, para. 571). A part of Jung's theory that is particularly interesting for me is his description of intense fear that an introvert may have

regarding the object, this fear contributing to the power the object seems to have over the person, further driving the introvert to struggle for freedom from the object (p. 378, para. 626). Upon circling back to a personal complex I refer to as my *prison complex*, I saw something more complex at work in me than I originally thought. In one sense I felt relief when I identified that my mother's expectations of me before I was born contributed to my needing to always have an escape route in life. It contributed to my understanding of why leaving home felt like escaping from prison, as well as my need for becoming independent, my desire to be a successful entrepreneur, and even my passion for advocating for women.

There is a particular statement by Jung that seems to match how I have experienced much of life. "But if the ego has usurped the claims of the subject, this naturally produces, by way of compensation, an unconscious reinforcement of the influence of the object" (Jung, 1921/1971, p. 378, para. 626). In my efforts to escape the object of my mother and her expectations, and because of her accompanying reinforcement of the devaluing of my own thoughts and feelings, I developed a real fear of losing myself in an object, another person for example. According to Jung's theory, this would explain my feelings of being overwhelmed by my own experiences and my tendency to over adapt to the needs of others. Further, whereas Jung suggested that introverted feeling manifests as a devaluing of the object, in my case the feelings of others almost always take precedence over my own. Because I was responsible for how my mother felt about herself, I developed an intense capacity to identify with and internalize the suffering of others, making it difficult for me to set boundaries. This

comes into conflict with and maybe contributes to the intensity of my experience with people.

When it comes to introverted intuition, Jung suggested that this type “does not concern itself with external possibilities but with what the external object has released within him” (Jung, 1971, p. 399, para. 656). Both the energy and feelings of the other person plus what becomes released within me having to do with my own experience often overwhelms me. My experience with others does not typically match Jung’s suggestion that “The images appear as though detached from the subject, as though existing in themselves without any relation to him” (p. 399, para. 657). I recall the feeling of wanting to crawl inside Phillip as we lay together. Another way Jung describes the introverted intuitive does not match my experience, specifically the introvert’s supposed lack of awareness of his body and how it affects others. I seem to have a particularly strong sense of my existence in the world and how my energy impacts others. Jung seems to suggest that the introverted intuitive experiences her body as an outer object instead of as part of her subjective inner world (p. 400). My experience as an introverted intuitive has been anything but feeling detached from my body. I wonder if it has been my conscious attempt at developing my sense of extraversion or if Jung’s theory is incomplete. Since one’s body could be seen as the boundary between the external and internal worlds, is it possible that one’s body could be experienced as part of the internal world of the introverted intuitive as well as part of the external world for the extraverted intuitive or sensing person?

I believe my body became part of my inner world when I became a pompom girl and took modeling lessons while I was in high school. I became aware of how my body

existed in space and how its energy impacted others around me. I became obsessed with my body and how what I put into it impacted how I felt. When I began practicing yoga in my forties, I had my first experience of merging with everything during the shivasana pose. As I grew older I had experiences of feeling one with the air, as though I had no physical body. These experiences fascinated me because I believed I was coming into contact with something that I could not articulate. Often I have felt as though I had no boundary but spread out into the space around me. I agree with Jung that underlying these experiences was potentially a preoccupation with the archetypal images, but at the same time there has been a mysterious attachment and valuing to the experiences themselves. Perhaps what I am describing is what Jung called the morally oriented intuitive, who “reflects on the meaning of his vision, and is less concerned with developing its aesthetic possibilities than with the moral effects which emerge from its intrinsic significance” (Jung, 1971, p. 402, para. 662). This certainly describes my experience. One final component of Jung’s theory that matched my experience is my odd response to sensation, what Jung describes as “a compensatory, extraverted sensation function of an archaic character” (p. 402). It makes sense that as a naturally introverted intuitive, my relationship with sensory data might be an exaggerated one. Perhaps this is where the body comes in, which for me is experienced as both part of my inner world and part of the external world.

I wonder how my psychological type contributed to my receptivity and openness to having the archetypal energies of sexuality and spirituality express themselves through my lived experience. Further, I wonder how the combination of my natural psychological type being frustrated by my childhood environment, combined with my particular

complexes and wounds also contributed to how these energies became expressed through my lived experience. Finally, a third contributing factor is that all of this occurred within a particular historical context. In his article *The Intuitive Function and Religious Orientation* (1992), psychologist Christopher Ross suggests that one's approach to spirituality may be informed by psychological type, and he offers specific themes when it comes to how people whose primary function is intuition approach spirituality. These themes helped me make sense not only of my personal spiritual experience, but also why others may find my approach frustrating. In addition to being driven by identifying the highest possible principles and focusing on what is common among different religious frameworks, Ross points out that Jung believed intuition to be a kind of doorway to the collective unconscious and its archetypal energy (p. 88). Further, it is through this doorway that wholeness and unity can be perceived, making intuition particularly important for individuation, the purpose of which is to move towards a feeling of wholeness as unity with Self and as part of the collective (p. 87). It may be intuition then that allows for some people to experience a kind of embodied and numinous sense of unity that is felt to be religious in nature. One more aspect of Ross's analysis in this article contributes to my own analysis, and this is the consideration of introverted intuition in particular. Since for someone with an introverted attitude, energy moves from object to subject, this movement could be said to further open the door to the archetypal images in the collective unconscious rather than get sidetracked or slowed down by the distraction of the sensing function. "Intuition resonates to the image of the archetype, but, to accomplish this, intuition must suppress the sensation function, which responds to the

impact of *particular* sense impressions. Concern with the archetypal image indeed is the distinctive role of introverted intuition” (p. 85).

What does the introversion part of the equation contribute to the ultimate capacity to come into contact with the archetypes of the collective unconscious? In *The Experience of Introversion: An Integration of Phenomenological, Empirical, and Jungian Approaches* (Shapiro & Alexander, 1975), the authors articulate their findings from research on what it feels like to experience life as an introvert. My personal experience of reading of the book confirms for me their effectiveness in capturing what has been difficult to articulate when it comes to my experience. I often feel a manic kind of excitement about certain things contrasted with a deadness that occurs when too much time goes by without an encounter that facilitates some kind of new insights about the meaning of my life. My family captures my essence in just one word: intense. The word *growth*, even psychological or spiritual growth, feels inadequate as a descriptor of what I now understand is my intense need to experience my experiences in order to move towards my ultimate sense of purpose. My unconscious seems to never disappoint by offering me opportunities to bring theory to life. Not long after the ending of my relationship with Phillip, I was plunged into a time of feeling lack of motivation for anything, and I realized that the abrupt ending of my relationship meant an abrupt ending of a two-and-a-half-year source of intense experiences to play with. It felt as if I was experiencing a kind of withdrawal of the stimulation that fueled my purpose for living.

As a brief review, Shapiro and Alexander (1975) distinguish between two aspects of Jung’s theory of introversion, that of structural model and energy model. For introverts the subjective experience takes precedence over what might be perceived by others as the

objective facts of an event. Further, the images that are part of the introvert's subjective experience are drawn from the collective unconscious (p.19). It is important to note that for Jung introversion and extraversion are ways of perceiving two different realities. That the introvert's experience reflects the need for something archetypal from the collective unconscious to be expressed feels comforting as I reflect about times I feel a little crazy and misunderstood. The authors point out that the introvert is not aware that the images from the collective unconscious that become expressed do not have their source in the introvert (p. 46). That the image is universal matches my perception that what I seek to know are the highest possible principles that can be accessed for the purpose of the evolving consciousness of humanity. As I reread this statement, I appreciate the notion that I may mistakenly take credit as the source of an archetypal drive that originates in the collective unconscious and is seeking the proper doorway through which to enter consciousness. I have grown in my humility and respect for the archetypal energies that may choose to flow through me.

Shapiro and Alexander (1975) go on to offer a clearer distinction between the lived experience of an introvert and extravert. Whereas an extravert feels his experience to be dependent on the external event and believes that his experience is the same as others having the same experience, the introvert is experiencing her experience of the event, this experience being unique and changing (p. 119). The authors expand on the suggestion in Ross's (1992) article that introverted intuition has as its primary concern the archetypal image. If people who have a more dominant introverted attitude are more comfortable with paradox and ambiguity than those whose dominant function is sensing, when it comes to spirituality, then it makes sense that people who have a more dominant

extraverted attitude are focused on objective and absolute truth. Introverts are focused on the subjective experience of events, and extraverts are focused on what can be shared when it comes to the reality of an event (p. 123).

An important aspect of the Alexander and Shapiro's (1975) findings was the inaccuracy of assumptions about introverts being disengaged from the external world whether people, objects, or events. It is through engagement with the world that the introvert is stimulated, and her awareness of a unique experience, accompanied by reflection of how this experience, which changes the experience as it is experienced, contributes to the introvert's experiencing of her evolving and emerging self (p. 147). One other aspect of the authors' work is the paradox of the introvert's feeling that their experience is unique with the desire to share the insights that come from their reflected experience. Reflective of the authors' finding that introverts sometimes lack discretion about what to share, when I consciously embarked on my individuation journey I not only found myself needing to share my insights about my own experience of making sense of my journey, I enthusiastically embraced my new life as an over-sharer. I came to understand that for me sharing my evolving understanding of the meaning of my own midlife experience changed my experience and the understanding of my experience, ultimately contributing toward my individuation journey and emerging Self. Contrary to the authors' suggestion that this sharing creates distance with the other, my sharing seemed to attract certain people who perhaps found a piece of my story within them. It was clear when my sharing no longer stimulated them, and that was okay for both parties.

Burden feels like an effective way to describe the experience of being an introverted intuitive, especially before one has a way to describe what feels like intense

self-consciousness and separation from others. At a certain point in my young adult life, I began describing myself as hyper-aware of my lived experience; others would also describe me as very self-aware. As a child though, this self-awareness was experienced as extreme self-consciousness. My first attraction to a boy in fifth grade was experienced as naked exposure that I would now describe as a doorway through which an archetypal energy attempted to flow. At the time this energy overwhelmed me, and perhaps there was something about my fifth grade attraction to Doug that made the experience particularly intense. My feeling of being exposed was maybe a reflection of not understanding my receptive nature to the archetypal presence that seemed to be seeking connection with me through him. I was shy, insecure, and too self-conscious to act on the energy. I now realize there was a powerful force expressing itself through me. My experience of self-consciousness and insecurity continued to intensify but thankfully, middle school for me was experienced as a safe and accepting place to be an awkward person. I remember attempts by several teachers to bring me out of my inner world, and my being referred as a potential super model was just the boost I needed as I went off to high school to become a new person.

My attraction to Adam in seventh grade left me feeling intensely self-conscious. He would never know how I felt. From this point forward, I began to be open to receiving sexual attention although I played a passive role. As I reflect about my sexual experience leading up to my college attraction with Tom, a contributing factor to my shame had to do with my introverted intuition. I seem to have been unable to simply experience sexual affection without reflecting about the experience. Whereas an extraverted person may have simply responded to the physical stimulation of sexual arousal, I reflected about my

experience of the sexual experience, and I seemed unable to experience the event without feeling the need to find some larger meaning in my experience. As an introvert, I wonder if I have been particularly open to archetypal images in general, but specifically having to do with sexuality and spirituality. As an intuitive, I wonder if I have been particularly sensitive to being drawn into the world of the archetype, sometimes being overwhelmed by the experience. When I attempt to explain the experience of merging with everything to others, I get mostly blank stares.

Summary

In this chapter I explored how my individuation journey has been shaped by a complex relationship between my sexuality and spirituality. I considered where my experience matches existing theory and where perhaps theory needs to catch up with modern women's experience. I have come to appreciate that not only does the sexuality/spirituality connection make sense when considered through the lens of my personal and ancestral experience, but also that at this moment in the evolution of human consciousness, this makes sense archetypally as well. If it is true that at one time women, their bodies, and sexuality were revered, and that this reverence came to an end forcefully, those drives must eventually find a way to be expressed again. If spirituality is related to a sense of meaning and purpose, and if at one time women's bodies and sexuality were bridges to the Divine, then it makes sense that women's sense of purpose and meaning would be tied to their valuing their own bodies and sexuality. In addition, since many women of my generation found themselves eagerly developing their masculine at the expense of their feminine during the first part of life, it also seems to make sense that midlife might be the time during which what had been repressed and

suppressed might begin to break through into consciousness. Of course, this may happen against one's will.

Finally, it is useful to consider how one's psychological type impacts the experience of individuation generally or even whether there is a correlation between a certain psychological type and individuation being tied to the interplay between sexuality and spirituality. There may be many women of my generation, who also grew up with dominant mothers and passive fathers, and this may have also been a generational pattern. Why have the archetypes of sexuality and spirituality, drives that have manifested in such extreme ways, played so prominently in my individuation? Is there a connection between a specific psychological type(s) and this pair of archetypes driving one's individuation?

I also spent time digging deeper into how synchronistic events seemed first to gently prompt me to have a realization and over time became increasingly more assertive in trying to get my attention, and eventually came in the form of specific solutions required for real transformation. The theory of synchronicity as presented intellectually in many texts could become more useful to more people if illustrated through stories that focus on the experience of experiencing synchronicity. In the following chapters, I explore the masculine as safety from intimacy (Chapter 6), the feminine as vulnerability needed for intimate connection (Chapter 7), and the role film has played in my individuation journey and how my journey may reflect something collective (Chapter 8).

Chapter 6

Fear, Anger, and Safety in the Masculine

In this chapter I explore my insight that during the first half of my life, I aggressively pursued and developed traits of a masculine nature at the expense of those more feminine qualities. When I write about the masculine and feminine, I am attempting to detach the concepts from gender. I have come to appreciate the masculine as having the need for clarity, purpose, and straightforward solutions. I appreciate Virginia Apperson's (2008/2009) description of the feminine as the capacity to hold the tension between what seem like opposing qualities. The co-author with John Beebe of *The Presence of the Feminine in Film* suggests being able to deal with ambiguity and paradox, which means to see the truth in both sides of an issue, seem to be the comfortable domain of the feminine (pp. 5-14). These very traits agitate the masculine. In fact, it seems to be the masculine that wants to assign gender to the feminine and masculine.

The insight that I had been hiding in the masculine came as a result of conscious awareness of a deeper meaning to an explosive reaction to an interaction with Phillip. At the time, I did not know that this was the beginning of the end of our two-and-a-half-year transformative relationship. Perhaps the intensity of my regressive response to the event made it easier for me to identify it as a defensive retreat to a former attitude that felt familiar and safe. Further reflection made it clear that my desire to retreat was a kind of resistance to the significant progress I had made when it came to intimate connection. The emotional out-loud dialogue with my Self resulted in great suffering, and gratefully it took place within the safety of my daily morning reflection ritual.

Jung's theory of the transcendent function came to life as the conflict between my desires to both experience more intimacy and avoid the risk of being hurt produced a new position. Holding the tension between the two resulted in a decision to embrace a new level of vulnerability that was necessary for an even deeper level of intimacy. In *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man*, Jungian analyst Edward Edinger (1975/1984) describes this resultant new position as an increase in consciousness, and suggests that the ego is the facilitator of new consciousness (p. 18). In order for the ego to play this role, it has to have at least a basic level of trust of the Self. Edinger also suggests that new consciousness is more than simple knowing, rather new consciousness requires knowing in relationship. "To achieve authentic consciousness, the ego" must be seen and known by the Self, this experience being akin to an encounter with the God-image (p. 42). Likewise, the Self (God-image) must be seen and known by the ego. It is understandable that the ego does not want to be naked to the Self because the ego seems to be about safety. The smallest threat to that safety can feel like intense vulnerability. The Self, which seems to be in a superior position, does not necessarily want to be seen or challenged by the ego either. The way of the Self feels covert, and when challenged by the ego, must admit its plans cannot be fully executed without the eventual acceptance of the ego.

This is beautifully captured in Jung's (2010/1960) psychological interpretation of the Biblical story about Job. In *Answer to Job*, Jung suggests that in order for God/Self to become conscious, it must be seen and challenged by humankind/ego in order to know itself and to evolve. In order for the individual to grow in consciousness, she must be open to the unknown and inexplicable forces that exist in life and then take responsibility

for coming to one's own understanding. This means that one's ego has to be both receptive to the unknown and active in its consideration of how to find meaning in and integrate that meaning into conscious life. Likewise, the Self is both active in what feels like its torture of an individual and receptive to the challenge of its actions. The expansion of consciousness, rather than being a masculine endeavor seems to require a partnership between the masculine and feminine, the Self and ego, and God and humanity.

The experience of this insight had two significant results for me personally, the first being clarity that made it possible to quickly process the ending of one relationship while remaining receptive and prepared to further experiences of even deeper intimacy. The second result was my capacity to become aware of the increasing consciousness in the collective of this tension between the desires for intimacy and safety. A recent Netflix series called *Love* (Apatow, Arfin, & Rust, 2016), seemed to capture not only the tension between the desires for intimacy and safety, the masculine and feminine, and relations between men and women, but in my eyes successfully illustrates the emergence of the transcendent third. The transcendent third in this case was increased compassion and capacity for relatedness.

During my nightly viewing of the series, my awkwardness, discomfort, and confusion was an indication that some new view was emerging in my own psyche when it comes to the modern-day breakdown of old values and the emergence of new values. The series tracks a relationship between an unlikely match of a man and woman both thirty-something in age. Multiple complexes and projections erupt one after another. Throughout the series though, which unfolds in a humorous fashion, the couple is

actually consciously able to hold the tension between them and their psychological growth is tremendous. Their journey reflects what Jung meant by a psychological relationship, although they do not seem to require the container of marriage as Jung implied in *Aspects of the Feminine* (1982/1996, p. 41). Perhaps marriage in a way sometimes inhibits this kind of psychological growth. Without the obligation of marriage, the driving force is authentic love for another, not obligation. There might be a parallel between today's breakdown of the marriage container and the breakdown of the religious dogma container. For many people, these containers no longer facilitate meaningful growth. This may be part of the meaning of my own journey.

Fluidity of Masculine and Feminine

If part of humanity's task is the reconciling of the feminine and masculine faces of the God-image (Self), then it makes sense that this work might take place simultaneously within and between romantic partners, and in our efforts to find meaning in our existence. It makes sense that the concepts of masculine and feminine occupy a realm where you can never quite grasp their meaning. In *Aspects of the Feminine* (1982/1996), Jung suggested that symbols arise as the best possible expression of something that cannot be expressed in a literal manner, and as archetypes, the feminine and masculine are not able to be known except through specific and individual manifestations (p. 107). As I continue to explore the concepts of masculine and feminine through a depth psychology lens, I appreciate more their complexity and fluidity as these important archetypes seek expression today.

If the collective unconscious can be referred to, in part, as God (God-image) or the Self, which seeks to know itself through humanity's consciousness (Edinger,

1975/1984), then archetypes can be seen to be a kind of prompting or invitation by God or the Self to bring form to the archetype that contributes to greater consciousness on the part of God/Self and the individual/collective ego. If one considers the fact that as archetypes, feminine and masculine are not in and of themselves able to be fully apprehended, and given that we have yet to reconcile these symbolic opposites, it is important and even urgent to consciously explore new representations of them in individual lives. As Jung suggested, the progress of a group or society depends upon the growing consciousness of the individual. Jung beautifully captures the importance of being able to manage the tension between the individual and the collective in “The more individual it is, the more it develops those qualities which are fundamental to the collective conception of humanity” (Jung, 1977, p. 298, para. 506). This sentiment gives great meaning to my particular journey and why the exploration of how the feminine and masculine are manifesting in individual women’s lives could shed light on what may be emerging in the collective that we are not yet able to comprehend. However, as these experiences become known, a new image may emerge that has collective meaning.

In the introduction to *Aspects of the Masculine* (Jung, 1989/1996), Jungian analyst John Beebe notes that C. G. Jung never published texts that specifically addressed the psychology of men, women, feminine, or masculine. However the author states, “To understand what C. G. Jung means by ‘the masculine’ is to gain access to the ground of his entire approach to psychology” (p. vii). What I appreciate most about Jung is his admission that his theories developed, in part, out of his own psychological experiences. These experiences were contained within his unique personal and cultural contexts and within a specific time period where women had perhaps reached the low point of their

domestication by a model of social organization that elevated certain traits over others, claimed them as male traits, and devalued everything else. These devalued traits or ways of being were projected onto women as a gender. Jung was not only open to engaging with these other values and traits, which came to him in the form of the feminine, he referred to this part of himself as a soul image that was missing in individual men and in society. It is clear that Jung never intended his theories to be the last word on anything. It is also clear that as time goes by, depth psychology through a women's lens may become more differentiated. For me it is clear that the views of the earliest women Jungians understandably were formed through a male lens and a notion of masculine and feminine that was defined by Jung and men.

Beebe (1996) says something very interesting. Whereas he suggests that Jung's most important insight was the "association of masculinity with the process of becoming conscious" he also states that Jung left out the "feminine contribution to consciousness" (p. x). If one is careful not to tie feminine or masculine to gender, I can accept that the masculine might symbolize the drive to bring light to what is unconscious and the feminine as the collective unconscious, which Jung refers to as the anima. In fact one way I have integrated the feminine and masculine is to see the masculine as my capacity to bring form to embodied experience. For example, reconnecting with my feminine has meant learning the art of knowing when to allow my intuition to lead over the objections of my ego. During a three-month period of this dissertation process, my intuition seemed to take over as it led me from one text to another with no obvious rhyme or reason. I felt compelled to read all of these texts from beginning to end. I felt helpless not knowing when and if this would end and at what point I would be able to begin writing my

analysis. The image of womb emerges as I recall feeling enveloped by inspiring and enlightening material and confident that it was contributing to my eventual written analysis. I also felt real fear at the possibility I would not be able to articulate what was flowing in the lava of my uterus. Just as the beginning of this phase felt distinct, the end felt just as distinct. One day I felt as if a spell was broken and my masculine seemed to push me to open up my laptop and start writing. Out came 150 pages of analysis over the next three months. The letting go of control of the process turned into receptivity to what seemed to want to flow through me. In the end I felt relief. I am a beginner when it comes to trusting my intuition, and my ego seems slow to share its power.

This drive to bring light to what is unconscious or to bring form to the unformed potential creation seems to be symbolized by the Hero's journey, which is usually presented as a violent overthrowing of what is in the shadow. In Jung's writing on the alchemical symbolism of the myth of Sol and Luna, he describes Luna as passive, giving credit to Sol for consciousness (Jung, 1989/1996, p. 95, para. 117). Perhaps a better word might be receptive, because the unconscious is anything but passive. Receptivity might better describe the Self's willingness to be seen by the ego. Willingness is an active choice. In *Answer to Job* (Jung, 1960/2010), God did not have to engage in a debate with Job but he did. Jung suggested that the archetypes originate in the collective unconscious and they descend upon us, feeling like an alien invasion (Jacobi, 1959/1974, p. 23). He also referred to the collective unconscious as anima, which he defined as the feminine soul-image of man (Jung, 1989/1996). Following this train of thought, the feminine seems to be a very active force. This distinction reminds me of how perspective can be limiting or liberating, and how important it is to wrestle with these notions of masculine

and feminine. Consider the image of a man's sperm attempting to penetrate a woman's egg. The one-sided masculine perspective suggested that the man's sperm was the determining factor in fertilization as it forced its entry into the passive ovum. An alternative perspective though suggested that in fact the egg played an active role in allowing it to be penetrated by just the right sperm. The fertilization could be seen to require a partnership between two parties that were in fact both active and receptive.

Jung also describes the feminine and masculine as styles of consciousness (Jung 1989/1996). The masculine is defined as Logos or the capacity to discriminate, judge, and reflect. Even though reflecting is active, to reflect successfully requires receptivity to being transformed by the result of the reflection. The feminine is defined as Eros or the capacity to relate, and to relate is active (p. 85, para. 224). Again, if one does not tie these capacities to gender, then one might be able to notice two journeys sometimes happening simultaneously – the masculine Hero's journey and the feminine Heroine's journey.

Jungian analyst, Edward Edinger, in *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man* (1984/1975), suggests that Jung believed the purpose of human life was to create consciousness (p. 17). The process by which consciousness is created seems to require a partnership approach. The Hero's journey without the balance of the Heroine's journey has contributed to quite the opposite of consciousness. Heroine's journey is what comes to mind when I consider Robert Johnson's (1989) beautiful description of what he perceives to be the psychological journey of the masculine. In his book *He: Understanding Masculine Psychology*, the Jungian analyst is careful to position the book as not limited to men's psychology. Unfortunately, over and over he relates the masculine to men and conflates the terms. For example, his view that women are born with and

maintain “a sense of beauty, connectedness, and at home-ness in the universe that man does not have” (p. 55) seems more like a projection than an understanding of the complexity of women’s experience. The author’s suggestion that a woman’s capacity to resist her man’s projections during his individuation journey through her quiet presence causes me to wonder further about this projection onto women of the responsibility to facilitate men’s consciousness (p. 70).

Who plays this role for women? During the journey of re-exploring my relationship with Christianity, I found this projection onto women in two Christian-based films that I viewed. The women in the film (e.g., wife, mother, grandmother, friend) played the role of spiritual leader while at the same time professing a submission to Christian men as their spiritual leader and mediator with Christ. The stories were actually effective illustrations of what it looks like to take back a projection, which if mutual, offers an excellent example of true partnership between men and women. It feels that in the Christian myth, men are not required to take full responsibility for their own spiritual development. Even though Jung and depth psychologists who are writing from the male perspective do not intend to commit the same offense, I sometimes feel this is what their words imply.

At the same time men or the masculine seem to take the credit for achieving the result. In the film *The Case for Christ* (Gunn, 2017), a journalist feels compelled to investigate the existence of Christ following his wife’s newfound faith after what she perceives as a miracle that saved their daughter’s life. One of the reasons the film is compelling is that the reporter is an unabashed atheist with a not-so-hidden agenda to prove that Christ does not exist. In the end it is not his masculine oriented detective work

that causes his conversion although it is very compelling. It was his feminine intuition and his wife's mysterious conviction that were the defining factor in his knowing the reality of Christ for himself. In fact, in almost every interview of religious scholars in this film, when pushed to explain the source of their faith, they called on their intuition, a quality typically associated with the feminine. The film was another excellent illustration of what it looks like to take back a projection; his wife's praying for her husband to open his heart is what put everything in motion.

Hiding in the Masculine

A deeper understanding of the concept of the masculine led me to consider that my pursuit of the masculine at the expense of the feminine may have been just what I needed to protect me from the kind of vulnerability and receptiveness required for intimate connection. In addition, I believe my body became a kind of battleground on which this masculine dominance of the feminine played out. I am not saying that the masculine is not capable of connection, rather that the masculine under the current patriarchal or dominator model of social organization has been distorted and its legacy is a dynamic that keeps the feminine and masculine at odds both internally as well as in relationships.

Challenging the assumption that the masculine has always been necessarily associated with dominance or even aggression is important. In her book *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body* (2011), cultural historian and systems scientist Riane Eisler presents evidence that patriarchy, which she refers to as a dominator model of social organization, may have emerged not as a natural evolutionary urge, but as a result of trauma. In her earlier book *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*

(1988), Eisler presented findings that suggested that before patriarchy there were more peaceful societies, there were not massive inequities, and there is no evidence that women were subordinate to men. In fact, the new evidence-based theories she outlines in *Sacred Pleasure* (2011) suggest that in these more partnership oriented societies, where neither women nor men are subordinate, the union of male and female through sexuality was viewed and experienced as sacred (p. 17). Not only was the phallus revered, but the “female vulva was revered as a magical portal of life, possessed of the power of both physical regeneration and spiritual illumination and transformation” (p. 15). In these societies, which scientists believe tended to be located in more fertile areas of the globe, myths aligned with the regenerative powers of nature versus the hierarchies based on fear and force, which are believed to have developed in more harsh areas. These hierarchies aggressively expanded and sustained themselves through the institutionalization of trauma (p. 101).

Eisler’s (2011) work is important because it helps explain the stubborn unconscious tendencies of many men to feel threatened by women’s expression of power. It also helps explain many women’s unconscious tendency to compromise when they perceive their man’s suffering. If a man’s sense of worth continues to be based on position, and a woman’s expression of herself somehow threatens that position, both men and women are put in an impossible position unless they are conscious of this dynamic. Once an entire generation of women, me included, entered the male-dominated world of work, thinking we were gaining access to opportunities to create and contribute in meaningful ways, we would not only be co-opted into this system of hierarchy, we would also become victim to the same definition of what it means to be successful. In my mind,

women have not been able to really bring the feminine into the masculine world of politics, economics, education, and larger social movements. What I appreciate about Eisler's work are her efforts to bring attention to the fact that a more partnership-oriented social organization is not only part of our history but also that it is also a model towards which we can strive. In addition, she brings attention to the real culprit of institutionalized trauma. These findings are important for several reasons, including contributing towards my capacity to make meaning out of the events that have occurred during my individuation journey. These findings should be enthusiastically embraced by men as well, because they work towards liberating men from a system which manipulates and exploits them as much as women.

It was not until I explored the fear that came to the surface during a conversation with Phillip that I came to appreciate how I have unconsciously remained in the safety of the masculine for most of my adult life. On this occasion I took a breath and courageously shared my feeling with him that part of my calling might be to explore how Christianity might evolve out of patriarchy. I had come to understand that part of the purpose of our relationship had to do with attempting to reconcile the message of Jesus, whose message seemed to reflect Eisler's partnership model, with the sexist text that was produced through the lens of the wounded masculine and men, which became doctrine. At this point I had excitedly absorbed so much that Dr. Ann Ulanov (1971, 1994, 1986/2002, 2006, 2008) and Rosemary Ruether Radford (1983, 2012) had to uncover when it came to revealing not only the strong feminine that is present in the Bible but the lack of consensus that existed at the very start of the creation of the dogma of Christianity. I began to feel that there was some kind of golden treasure that could be

found if one just looked hard enough. I began to feel a sort of purpose for my journey. The Self is tricky though; my rush to find meaning and attach myself to a new purpose eventually became understood as a fantasy. This fantasy served the purpose of keeping me engaged in this phase of my individuation. In *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective* (1993), this feminist theologian Sandra Schneiders' suggests that if the Bible is understood as a text that reflects the human experience of the Divine as experienced through the human lens and communicated through the human language, then "all the flexibility and power of the process of interpretation can be mobilized to liberate the text from its own limitations and women from the oppressiveness of the text" (p. 51).

During the relationship with Phillip I became receptive to and believe I connected with what I consider are the higher principles for which Christ stands. I enjoyed the Bible app narrator's commentary, which helped me understand how the Old Testament could be seen through the lens of the New Testament. When seen through this lens, one can appreciate how humanity's understanding of their relationship with God has evolved over time. I wondered about the timing for another jump in humanity's understanding of its relationship with God. On the other hand, I suppressed my questions about why no one ever explained the meaning of the many stories of violence against women. Unfortunately, Christian dogma does not seem to be able to keep pace with humanity's need to continue evolving its relationship with the Creator. Instead, the growing numbers of people who embrace a spirituality that is more inclusive are matched by a movement of people who seem to be more fundamentalist than ever in their understanding of God.

Again, my fantasy continued to be deflated and understood as my last-ditch effort to save Christianity.

At a certain moment during this exchange with Phillip, I became the victim of a complex, and likely it was the extra glass of red wine that loosened up my ego enough for some repressed feminine energy to be released. Phillip dismissed this possibility for my calling by referring to his understanding of Biblical truth that woman was made out of man and for man. I felt like a volcano on the verge of erupting, and I appreciate Murray Stein's (1983) use of the volcano metaphor for how the psyche can explode in a way that shatters some viewpoint, but that the flowing lava that follows the eruption "forms and reforms the landscape of our psychological lives" (p. 2). My anger and inability to respond took me by surprise, and I could feel myself rising above and out of my body, watching myself walk away from the conversation. His statement should not have been a surprise to me, and I had consciously been working on my capacity to listen to someone else's beliefs. I was more frustrated that I was unable to respond intelligently to his statement than about the actual statement. After chastising myself for an inability to tolerate another's viewpoint related to spirituality, I was able to call on my sense of humor as I realized I found my Patriarchal God wound.

Instead of exploring the righteousness of my anger, I judged myself for not being able to accept someone else's beliefs, beliefs stating I was subordinate to someone for the sole reason I did not have a penis (and did have a womb). Perhaps this explosion resulted from a collision between my masculine and feminine. I know my body's response to his statement was a release of an ancient fear of assault. My masculine knows this man and his views are not a threat to me. Perhaps that is not true for all of me though and it is time

to bring this fear and anger out of the shadow in an empowered way. My body just does not seem to want to let it go. These beliefs are in fact dangerous, as reflected in continuing attempts to restrict women's access to birth control and other reproductive services. The fact that my daughter fears losing her right to control her body speaks to the fact that not only do we carry an old wound but that women's bodies are still the major lever of keeping a dominator system in place as Eisler (2011) suggests.

Following this incident, instead of feeling safe, I felt trapped in the false promise of the masculine intellect to protect me from the vulnerability and fear of being murdered. The first time I read Margaret Atwood's quote, which is captured in her book *Second Words: Selected Critical Prose, 1960-1982* (1982), "Men are afraid that women will laugh at them; women are afraid that men will murder them," I cringed and felt that it was extreme, and at the same time I felt its truth. Now I feel this quote captures the depth of the collective wound that women carry either consciously or unconsciously. Some women are aware of the fear they feel of assault or harassment on a daily basis, and others, like me, are conscious of this collective fear that has accumulated over centuries of being punished and even murdered for resisting patriarchy. Perhaps this automatic judgment of myself reflected an unconscious desire to avoid a modern version of what felt like a losing battle. In fact, I am becoming more and more intrigued by the fact that this journey is taking me somewhere that my Self seems to be keeping secret for the time being. I have a fear that I am being forced to circle back to the issue of women's bodies, and the thought feels exasperating.

In addition to the opportunity to birth and raise two wonderful human beings, perhaps motherhood was also an opportunity to take a break from the intense feminist

work in which I was involved. I detached from the movement feeling exhausted at the reliance on anger as a motivating force for bringing change. I often wondered why it seemed so impossible for people to have a conversation about their views, especially when it came to abortion. I have a much more nuanced understanding of what is beneath the surface now of this issue, which has not as much to do with saving unborn lives as it does with maintaining this dominator model through control of women's bodies. Eisler's (2011) warning that the battle between the dominator model and the emerging partnership model depends very much on how we view the body, women, and sexuality feels very real to me now. She states:

This is why reconceptualization of the female body from a symbol of sexual and spiritual power to an object under control of men was integral to the prehistoric shift to a dominator social organization. This reconceptualization of the female body as an object to be controlled by someone outside that body had important results. It justified men's domination and exploitation of women's bodies . . . gradually led women themselves to image their bodies from a male perspective.

(p. 164)

There seems to be a paradox at work here. One might think that someone who is hiding in their masculine might feel comforted by a patriarchal religion like Christianity, which values the mind over the body, but as I continue to reflect on my spiritual journey, I see so much complexity underneath the struggle to experience the Divine, my struggle having to do with the noise of other people's opinions about what a proper relationship with the Divine looks like. I feel my rejection of Christianity is now grounded both in feminine intuition and masculine intellect. My masculine sought to explore the Catholic

version of Christianity as a young adult during my college years at a Jesuit university. Instead of clearing up any misunderstandings I thought I might have had, I was presented with sexist interpretations that served to further alienate me. The more I seek to understand Christianity, the more confident I seem to feel rejecting it. Intuition now is backed up by my intellect and my lived experience of the reconciling of sexuality and spirituality through my body.

As a young adult, the desire to connect to God was there, but it was religion that pushed me away over and over. I can now see there was and continues to be a struggle between the masculine and feminine within me, which shows up as an intuitive feminine knowing that what has been presented as truth is in fact not absolute truth, and then a questioning of my intuition by my masculine reflected in my pursuit and analysis of other people's version of the truth. I can now appreciate the suffering caused by holding this tension as part of the process some individuals are engaged in that reflects the creation of a new myth. As Edinger (1975/1984) suggests in *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man*, the new myth will not be a new religion but a new consciousness of the underlying meaning of all major world religions. In the creation of this new myth, it will be the individual that serves as the vessel for the continued incarnation of God (p. 32). Reframing my struggle in this manner serves to elevate my sense of purpose and meaning of this struggle, a component of which is to become a vessel for the continued incarnation of God.

My understanding of the masculine has become more nuanced as I recognize that the masculine I have been hiding in is a wounded masculine. Carol Gilligan (2018), American feminist, ethicist, and psychologist offers a theory about why patriarchy

persists that goes beyond the seemingly obvious explanation that those in power resist relinquishing power. She views patriarchy today more as a system of hierarchy than an attempt by men to control women, and that there now is in place a psychological need to maintain patriarchy. If patriarchy requires the denial of real relationship in order to maintain its focus on hierarchy and profit at any cost, I can see that staying in the masculine realm was a way for me to avoid the vulnerability needed to come into relationship with my rejected feminine and the Divine. This got me thinking about an unconscious motivation for pursuing the masculine path. In addition to being seduced by the promise of equality and making a unique and creative contribution to the world, I may have been looking for a way to compensate for not having felt truly loved during my childhood. Knowing you are loved and feeling loved are two different things, and I did not leave childhood with a strong feeling of being loved. I had also been the victim of physical and emotional bullying in elementary school, and I remember wondering where the adults were that were supposed to protect me. I was quiet, shy, insecure, and well behaved, which means my suffering was silent and invisible. As Gilligan (2018) outlines, the most recent child development theories suggest that we are all hard-wired for connection, and Eisler (2011) reminds us of humans' survival being dependent on touch (2011). Perhaps because I am an introverted intuitive, instead of acting out, I sought refuge in my masculine intellect. At an early age, I developed an intense desire to be an entrepreneur and successful businessperson, which I now see as attempts to exert control over my life. I went off into the world to become independent.

Greek Goddess Artemis as Union of Masculine and Feminine

My relationship with the Greek myths has become uneasy given mounting evidence that they reflect this losing battle between maintaining reverence for the feminine through the Goddess and its union with the masculine and the increasing institutionalization of a dominator social organization model. Not only did the Goddess and women gradually become subordinate to the Gods and men, these myths reflect the way this subordination was forced and maintained through domination and violence (Eisler, 2011). This need for violence, specifically sexual violence, makes it clear that being subordinate was not a natural state for women, as reflected in the need to co-opt characteristics of the former Goddess to reduce the likelihood of rebellion against the new social order.

The preoccupation by so many of the Greek Gods with violence, war, and raping of women, should never in my mind be looked at only through a psychological lens. The violence against women in these myths mirrors reality for the women of that time as a dominator model was taking hold. Whereas it is fair to appreciate this time during which important, although incomplete, democratic ideals that became the foundation of Western civilization were produced, there is an ugly part to this history that often seems glossed over. Women during these Greek times were not even considered citizens. On the other hand, knowing how these myths contain pieces of a time when the Goddess, the feminine, women's bodies, and sexuality were revered, I feel empowered to relate to the myths in a way that makes sense for me. If the Greek myths only partially reflect what came before, then I am free to dig deep for the truth that I intuitively know, which helps me contribute to new interpretations of old myths and development of new myths that

reflect a renewed reverence for not only the Goddess and the feminine, but also for union with the masculine. It will be important for men to also participate in the remembering of a time when the masculine was not predisposed to and manipulated by violence, and to contribute to new myths about the masculine and God.

Even though this chapter is about the masculine, I feel compelled to reflect on how Artemis seems to embody what might be considered masculine traits, which means the masculine possibly does not need to be represented by a god or a male. Perhaps Artemis is a kind of loophole in that she embodies a healthy balance of feminine and masculine in goddess form. In *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives* (1984/2014), psychiatrist and Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen, describes the complex and multi-dimensional nature of Artemis, who is considered to be the Greek Goddess of the Hunt as well as Goddess of the Moon. She is relationship oriented in an unselfish way, lessening the suffering of women in labor, rescuing her mother and other women from rape, protecting pre-adolescent girls, and even protecting the honor of the feminine. The story of Actaeon, the hunter who offended Artemis by looking at her naked body without permission, is interesting to me because she does not kill him directly. Rather she turns him into what his own hunting dogs would attack as prey. In contrast to the many Biblical stories that blame women for men's sexual transgressions, in this story Actaeon is responsible for and suffers the consequence of his lack of respect for Artemis's sexual nature, which is not to be co-opted. Further, whereas Artemis is independent, she does in fact fall in love with Orion. I find it interesting that Bolen blames Artemis's overly competitive nature for Orion's accidental death, when in fact it was her brother's deceit that tricked her into killing the man, which she related to

as friend and lover (p. 48). For me, this event reflects the threat that women's friendship and bonding with men represents to the dominator model. In my opinion, Artemis's healthy competitive spirit facilitated the connection with Orion.

A thick thread of the archetype of the Greek Goddess Artemis has been strongly present throughout my life. The most distinguishing feature of Artemis is that she is a virgin in the sense that she does not require marriage or a man to be fulfilled or whole. She is independent and a protector of women, especially young women who still have that feisty energy, and her female nymphs run free and unhampered by the conventions of society. Whereas Bolen (1984/2014) suggests that the father's support and approval are needed to develop a healthy sense of Artemis, I am unsure whether or not this is true in my case. All of my parents were encouraging, but the source of any direction or guidance came solely from my mother, whose masculine was overdeveloped in a negative way. This is at least the second time I find myself considering a rethinking of the implication that children learn the masculine way of being from the father. This may not necessarily be true anymore in an age of an increasing number of women who have developed not only a healthy sense of the masculine but even a healthy balance of the masculine and feminine. This assumption also works to trap men in a stereotyped role, because it assumes men are automatically in touch with and identify with a stereotype of what it means to be masculine and a man. I think this trend of women—and maybe men—who have a healthy balance of feminine and masculine traits may just be starting to emerge as women begin to seek to reconnect with their feminine after over-developing their masculine.

Bolen (1984/2014) goes on to suggest that a woman who has a strong sense of Artemis energy is focused, usually identifies with and may be an advocate for feminist issues, and has a kind of sisterly and brotherly relationship with women and men. This is true in my case. Of course, all of these attributes have both a light and dark side, and I can now recognize how another Greek Goddess—Aphrodite—complements Artemis in order to ensure a woman's sense of independence does not prevent intimate connection. In the paragraphs that follow I share how Artemis has been present in my life, and I will talk later about how Aphrodite has attempted to complement Artemis throughout my life, especially during midlife.

From the age of nine I exhibited an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to become a professional woman. I delighted in building my babysitting business and reaching the thousand-dollar mark in my savings account. At the age of 16, I declared to my mother that I would not be marrying at least until age 25. I was an active seeker of knowledge and an explorer of possibilities. Having consciously developed the courage to do the things it would take in order to become this independent professional woman, I sought out opportunities to lead once I got to college. It was here that I pursued a parallel path with enthusiasm equal to what I had for my budding professional life. There seemed to be a collision of events and forces that drove me to enter the feminist movement. I experienced consciousness-raising quickly as I listened to theology professors tell me women were paying the price for Eve's causing the fall of humanity in the form of pain in childbirth. Another professor of political science refused to discuss the merits of a Biblical example he used because it would challenge his religious views. Another professor warned during one class that he was going to discuss the issue of

overpopulation despite the fact he could be fired for doing so. Finally, another professor shared her exasperation after having had to work for years to have her class about sexism and racism contribute towards the required credits for philosophy.

At 22 years of age I was a nontraditional college freshman, and I sat open-mouthed as every woman in a class on sexism and racism judged Anita Hill for not speaking up about the sexual harassment she stated she suffered at the hands of the then nominee for U.S. Supreme Court Justice. They could not seem to relate to a time when women could be legally fired for resisting sexual harassment. The harsh criticism of her was perplexing. Perhaps the final meaningful coincidence was my personal experience of having to make the difficult choice of ending a pregnancy during a time when attacks on women's right to abortion were growing more common, intense, and violent in my community. The fact that these groups were founded by and led by men did not escape my observation. I would embrace an active role in feminism until my children were born, where it would go underground until midlife. There I would stay in the safety of my intellect, independence, and parenting responsibilities until decades later when I began reflecting about the unraveling of my marriage of 24 years.

On the other hand, just as the Goddess refuses to disappear, as beautifully revealed in Jean Shinoda Bolen's (1995/2004) book *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Quest For the Sacred Feminine*, my rejected feminine would find expression in a less personal and possibly more safe manner. Even as I developed my masculine traits, pursuing a career in financial planning, connecting with my male colleagues, and bragging how I found men more interesting conversationalists than women, I found myself called to become a feminist activist. Bolen's enlightening description of how

many Christian churches were built upon the remains of sites where the Goddess was worshipped (2014), compelled me to explore all of the places my feminine attempted to express herself. While I consciously distanced myself from women and the feminine, I developed into an ardent feminist, also bragging that I would fight for the right of women to choose their own destiny, even if my choice would be different. Even as a feminist I now realize that I remained in the realm of the masculine, although the reasons for this are complex. It might be true that I found comfort in theory, but it is definitely true that in order to influence policies that impact women's lives, feminists had to present their case in masculine terms, which meant lived experience was subordinate to personal facts and figures.

The term "father's daughter," as described in Jungian-oriented psychotherapist Maureen Murdock's (1990) book *The Heroine's Journey*, matches my coming of age experience, and I suspect many other women who came of age in the 1980s. However, contrary to Murdock's suggestion that father's daughters rejected their mothers because their mothers represented a limited picture of what they could achieve, I rejected my mother simply because I felt she was mean—to me, my father, and to my stepfather (Murdock p. 14). In fact, my mother was my biggest cheerleader, and she often assured me that I could achieve anything. Unfortunately, her verbal encouragement was undermined by her need for validation of her parenting based on my behavior. Instead of my mother representing a weak woman or stereotypical feminine, she took on a complex persona, which reflected both a wounded feminine and wounded masculine. It is true I identified with and over-valued my father, looking for his rescue from my mother, but both my biological father and stepfather were passive when it came to parenting.

Murdock (1990) suggests that on a woman's journey, she must heal the mother/daughter split within. I suspect that most mother/daughter relationships are complex contrary to Jung's (1982/1996) suggestion in *Aspects of the Feminine* that "Only in the daughter is the mother complex clear and uncomplicated" (p. 114). As soon as I unravel one aspect of the relationship with my mother, who passed away shortly after my individuation journey began, I find something more complex hiding behind the new insight, reminding me of Jung's suggestion that we circle around our complexes over time, each time being able to go a little deeper. It feels as if each time I come up for air after gaining a new insight, I am either plunged back under water against my will or I feel compelled to willingly go deeper. My feminine wound may be especially deep because of my mother's own feminine wound. As far as I can observe, she was part of at least three generations of women whose father was either absent or an alcoholic and abuser, leaving the mothers whose stress led to further alcoholism and abuse. My mother's meanness surely covered up a severe lack of love. She wanted to do better, and she wanted better for me, but her projection of what she could not be and do left me with a hunger to achieve, accompanied by a self-imposed glass ceiling. My mother hid in a dark masculine and feminine, which came in the form of an overly punitive parenting approach and a focus on behavior and appearances. My motivation for separating from my mother was a conscious escape from her suffocating expectations and criticism, and it felt liberating instead of like dismemberment as Murdock (1990) describes (p. 18). My mother did not seem to possess a feminine nature at all, and my father and stepfather, whose fathers also were absent from most of their childhoods, and who also had rather mean mothers, seem to have been attracted to my mother as a version of their own mothers. My father and

stepfather both have feminine wounds, and since three generations of women in my mother's family and both my father and my stepfather lacked the presence of a father, they have masculine wounds as well. Given this reflection, to say that the mother/daughter relationship is complex seems to be an understatement.

I became conscious of my fear of becoming like my mother when I began to plan my family, but I was well aware of my fear of becoming like my mother first as a wife. Although I was very clear with my husband that I did not want to become the version of a wife his own mother offered either, that is indeed what I unconsciously became over the 24 years of our marriage. As our marriage was falling apart, I sat on the bed crying as I told him, "I don't want to be your parents." His mother seemed to be ahead of her time in the pursuit of education and career, but also made her own compromises to be in relationship with her husband. Unconsciously, I believe that in order to not become my mother, I over-compromised with my husband, and in the end in a way became a nuanced version of the very stereotype I sought to resist.

As Murdock (1990) suggests, as my mother unintentionally focused her anger onto me and forbid me from expressing my own emotions, I developed a capacity to control my emotions (p. 23). My repressed anger came out during my twenties when I was an active feminist, but then went back underground when I had children and sought to develop a kind of perfect patience as a mother. Allowing my children the space to fully express their emotions was a positive development, but doing so at the expense of expressing my own emotions has meant that I need to be alert to times when I need to express this old anger. Expressing or even recognizing my anger continues to be a challenge for me, but I have learned to listen to my body's prompting when it is time for

me to set some kind of boundary with someone or something, even if it causes me to feel like a “bitch.”

My mother/daughter wound does not reflect Murdock's (1990) suggestion that the mixed messages that mothers send are often to be like them but not be like them (p. 22). My mother's mixed messages included verbal encouragement that I could do anything I set my mind too, along with an undermining of that message by constant criticism of my behavior. I did do better than my mother, as she did better than her mother, but my overcompensation in the form of feeling responsible for my children's happiness is a way I may pass along my wound to my children. Both my daughter and son often express what a good parent I am. Instead of basking in their affirmation, I worry about the downside of their looking to me as the standard for what it means to be a good mother. My mother did better than hers, and there were kind men in my family, but my parents did not represent a very healthy example of relationship. I did better than my mother as a parent and a wife, and my husband and I were a better example of relationship, but I did not show the stress and anger due to my disproportionate share of the work as my now ex-husband ultimately became a somewhat passive bystander as well. I recently shared with my children that my only goal as a mother was to be good enough. My children now go off into the world attempting to do a little better, and I now have more appreciation for the ancestral wound that I carry having to do with the stolen love between a man and a woman that the couple brought to my dream council active imagination.

Whereas I would classify myself as a father's daughter, I am not convinced that the passive nature of both my father and stepfather was felt as abandonment by me. It is true that as a teenager I sought to escape my mother by asking my father to let me move

in with him. He complied, coming to pick me up and take me home, but after two days when it was clear he did not know what to do with me, I felt defeated and humiliated as I returned home to live out the rest of my high school days with my mother and stepfather. I am unclear whether this may have contributed to my awkwardness with men and my eventual desire to connect sexually through my body in a way that left me feeling humiliated instead of empowered. I went off into adulthood at a loss for how to connect generally and with the one positive message my mother gave me about achieving. I would go on to seek to connect with my feminine perhaps unconsciously through sex and develop my masculine through my obsession with being independent. However, I now do not believe my father and stepfather's passive nature caused me to seek validation through sexual relations with men. I am coming to a realization that being sexual is just how I existed but I did not know how to relate to it. It is more likely that I sought validation from my father in the form of intellectual and career pursuits, reflected in how I still today will tell people I developed my work ethic because of my father. My feminine wound did not cause me to reject being feminine, and perhaps this is because both of my parents did encourage me to be more successful in life than they were as Murdock (1990) suggests.

Armored Amazon is an accurate label for how I have approached life. Murdock (1990) suggests that separating from the mother and embracing the masculine life contributes positively to a woman's ego (p. 36). On the other hand, if a woman's father or male role models are not adequately interested in or involved in her life, she may develop a perfectionism in order to gain the interest that she has lacked by her father (p. 38). Just as a healthy control of emotions contributes positively to a woman's professional

development, her armor does the same. On the other hand, if these traits are developed to the exclusion of a healthy relationship with one's feminine, a woman may be unable to express her true creativity, tolerate the vulnerability needed for deep connection with another or the Divine, or feel things in an embodied way. For example, one outcome of my growing capacity to be vulnerable, surrender control, and receive sexually and spiritually has been an unleashing of creative desire. Out of my unconscious came emotionally felt memories of my delight in acting in a play, drawing, and expressing my body through dance. I felt like I was coming out of the closet again as I declared that I wanted to turn my work into a novel and screenplay. I felt and still feel so sure about this, but the compensating feelings of insecurity are barely bearable.

Just as my father's more passive involvement in parenting may have contributed to my perfection complex, my mother's internalized sense of not feeling good enough as a mother likely contributed to my obsession with doing things the correct way (Murdock, 1990, p. 64). My feeling of independence and doing things correctly with emotional neutrality served me well in the masculine world of work. It also caused me to become addicted to filling my time with activities that I suppose were attempts to fill a void. My achievement and perfection complexes likely developed as a result of my mother's conscious message that I could do anything combined with her unconscious message that I did not quite do things well enough. My father was likely involved enough, as after my parents divorced he never missed a weekend with his three daughters. He served the role as playmate more than father, and my mother handled the serious business of raising us. My stepfather, who was six years younger than my mother worked and followed her lead, likely feeling disempowered to step in to take our side when it was needed. A focus on

establishing my independence, but having in the back of my mind that I did not want to be as mean as my mother, may have contributed to how I feel I over adapted in my marriage. Perhaps it was the unconscious turmoil that led to the significant compromise of marrying someone more in order to escape than because I felt deep connection. I was not aware of any of this at the time of course, but the nature of my relationship with Phillip brought this to the fore. Throughout this relationship, I felt the kind of passion and connection I did not know was possible, but only after developing a capacity for being vulnerable, receptive, and giving in a romantic and sexual way.

Breakdown of the Overworked Masculine

As I approached 50, the busier I became, the more manic I felt, until my psyche put on the brakes and got my attention by *helping* my business fall apart, which quickly brought my attention to my marriage and its effect on my children. I suppose this was the first step in reconnecting with my feminine, being forced to pay attention to my most intimate relationships. As my marriage began to unravel, and I intuitively knew but consciously resisted the impending end, two energies in my psyche began arguing with each other. The first I came to call my inner lawyer, who is a man (he shows up once in a while), but I wonder whether he is an animus figure. He seems to be masculine in that he wants to protect me and he feeds into my complex having to do with doing things correctly. During active imagination, if I allow him to make his case, he goes away. He seems to just want to be heard and then he trusts me to make a choice. The other energy is my little girl who prompts me to do cartwheels, skip down the sidewalk, and dance naked when I get out of the shower. She always prompts me to move, while my lawyer wants me to think. My lawyer knows I need to play, which is why all he wants is for me

to think things through. I believe my inner lawyer became activated at the moment I intuitively knew my marriage was going to end, because he was worried about my giving into a desire to take back my childhood. With a critical mother and passive father, I had become overly serious and responsible, and once my marriage was falling apart, I fear my inner lawyer was worried I perhaps might overcompensate.

Hermes as Trickster would emerge out of my unconscious once again in the form of suspicions and intuitions having to do with the nature of my relationship with Phillip, which eventually ended. As I awaited move-out day, I found myself going from completely trusting Phillip to making sure my engagement ring from my first marriage was still in its hiding place. After unleashing my madwoman in order to advocate for my needs by setting the move-out date and forcing him to sign a piece of paper agreeing to pay me back for expenses I had covered for him, I swung the other way and became obsessed with worry about his future. Then I swung back the other way and became preoccupied with whether he had been using me. I believe this inner voice was trying to protect me by warning me to never open up and give someone my heart and hoping that I would regret this relationship. But my feminine knew that the risk involved was worth the kind of union I experienced even if only for a short time.

My real father issue might have more to do with the archetypal father, which has been co-opted by patriarchal religion. As I reflect on the thread woven through my experiences of attraction and relationship with men, it feels like the patriarchal God was responsible for much of my feminine wound. As I felt and sought connection with men from an early age, I also received all kinds of messages that the way I felt was wrong and instead of being able to explore, I kept my feelings secret. Every attempt I made to learn

about my childhood religion was met with condemnation of women, the body, and sexuality. My most recent attempt to give Christianity another chance by diligently searching for the highest principles in between the lines of the literal words ended in failure. Perhaps I should not throw out Christianity because a good number of its followers have a surface level or sexist understanding of its principles, but I am now confident in my rejection of this very limited understanding of the Divine. It is not my job to talk myself into connecting with a framework that is not natural for me.

Even after having opened up to the feminine within, I still find myself easily spooked and wanting to run into the safety of the masculine. In the initial stages of my journey with Phillip, I embraced the awkwardness of every moment because I knew this was the vulnerability needed in order to more deeply connect with someone. It felt exhilarating to take a chance, share what I was feeling, and not only survive, but each time feel a deeper connection and even joy that transcended what was going on between us on a literal level. Perhaps unconsciously I felt I had nothing to lose during this dating phase; it was just an adventure and I had no illusions or expectations of any kind of fantasy outcome or future. However, a two-year period of growing our relationship within very limiting circumstances, and then moving in together, brought a new consciousness about the very real risk of choosing to be vulnerable in order to continue to deepen connection.

Towards the end of my relationship with Phillip, my response to the sense that he was pulling away triggered deep-seated feelings of insecurity. Luckily, my ego was strong enough to resist an all-out projection onto my partner of filling my need for love, and I was able to retreat and reflect about the source of the insecurity, an old wound of

not feeling loved. I then had a conscious struggle within and without, which started with feeling and expressing my discomfort with the extent to which I felt dependent on him for feeling loved. This was followed by a kind of retreat into an image of being an independent woman living on her own again, which was then compensated by embodied memories of the deep connection and glimpses into what wholeness felt like as a result of my willingness to be vulnerable with this man. Now I realize that whereas this man acted as a bridge to the Divine, it was not his literal person but my capacity to surrender to and receive from the Divine. In fact, as time passed and I was able to separate him as a real man from the force that was working through him, I appreciated the Greek God, Hermes as Trickster, for saving me from going further than was required for me to gain the insights and experiences that have prepared me for a new level of intimacy and spirituality. I realize my mother complex is still alive and well in the form of my tendency to compromise myself for a romantic partner. In the interest of being curious and wanting to connect with someone for which I felt strong attraction, I was able to identify a significant number of defining moments where I, in a subtle way, diminished myself in order to build Phillip up. I have learned a great deal, but I still am not able to be and show my authentic self if I perceive it will cause my partner to feel diminished.

This realization that I am still a victim of this complex causes me to recall an image and line from a movie that stayed with me. In the romantic comedy film *Crazy Rich Asians* (Chu, 2018), Rachel Chu is a modest university professor raised by a single mom in New York. Her boyfriend Nick asks her to attend a family wedding in Singapore, and when she arrives, she is plunged into a strange world of wealth. She had not known that her humble boyfriend was part of one of the wealthiest families in Singapore. The

narrative includes the tension between Nick's cousin Astrid and her husband who comes from a modest background. Throughout the movie, Astrid finds herself holding back as a way of building her husband's confidence. There is a defining moment when she tells him "I can't make you something you're not." The popularity and commentary by women online of this one line from the movie means that it hit a nerve for others too. I thought I was conscious of the reason this line was a very poignant line for me, but not until the breakup with Phillip did I recognize that I still fall into this trap of what I call *over-adapting*. In fact, what I call over-adapting is really diminishing myself to allow a man to save face. Only in a dominator model of social organization do men need to elevate themselves in order to feel secure and women need to diminish themselves in order to avoid seeing a man feel diminished.

My spiral tattoo continues to comfort me as I am reminded that individuation unfolds more as a circling around a set of themes than as a linear path. This is a reminder that I will continue to circle around my wounds, each time strengthening my ego to prepare me for finding a deeper sense of meaning in my wounds and ultimate purpose when it comes to how I exist in the collective. I cannot think or do myself through the journey to reclaim my feminine. This journey to the feminine requires being with oneself, being with whatever one is feeling and thinking, accepting oneself, and resisting the temptation to do something with it. As Murdock (1990) suggests, truly being is actively focusing on remaining present even when you want to run away and distract yourself by thinking and doing (p. 128). I now realize my spiral tattoo mirrors back a kind of alternating movement between being, reflecting, integrating, and doing, which may occur even on a daily basis. Because this kind of movement requires vulnerability, openness,

and receptivity, having some kind of vessel, ritual, or framework, whether literal or symbolic, is critical. I believe I have needed this physical image in order to sever the hold of the masculine on me so that I could harness the creative feminine, which emerges mysteriously through intuition, physical attraction and passion, bodily symptoms, synchronicity, and even embodied experiences with film images.

In the space between fear and liberation of letting go of the need to know and control is a kind of disorientation where one sort of knows what is being let go or dying but where there is no birth yet of the capacity to just allow things to naturally occur. My realization of what felt like a precise moment in time of not being who I was but not knowing who I was becoming occurred in a flash of insight and an image of my walking through a doorway, one foot in one room and one foot in another room. I felt suspended, disoriented, and without an identity. I knew what to let go of, but I didn't know what to replace it with. Being conscious that I was in the liminal realm, I felt liberated and excited at developing a new part of me. The feeling of liberation though was in complete contrast to feelings of anxiety accompanied by dreams of crumbling teeth that had appeared years earlier.

Gilligan (2018) seems to help us move the conversation about traits and gender forward by focusing on patriarchy as an entrenched system as opposed to turning men and the masculine into an enemy. She suggests the crux of the issue has to do with relationship without naming the valuing of relationship as a specifically feminine trait. I appreciate this perspective because defining traits as feminine or masculine almost always leads to the traits being tied to gender. On the other hand, I do believe claiming traits as feminine likely empowers women to declare to the world the value of being

feminine and a woman. There seems to be a need to be validated out in the world before moving on and transcending gender by talking about traits as human instead of feminine or masculine. This same sensibility is present in Dr. Brene Brown's (2007) landmark research on shame and vulnerability. Again, instead of referring to the capacity to be vulnerable as a feminine trait, she simply talks about vulnerability. In addition, even though she set out to research specifically women's experiences of shame and vulnerability, she was approached by men who shared story after story of their own experience of shame and vulnerability. Both Gilligan and Brown's work highlight that the danger of a one-sided masculine-focused society is a severely diminished capacity for vulnerability, which is required for the deep connection they point to as a hardwired need in human beings.

Summary

In this chapter I explored how my pursuit of the masculine might have been motivated by both its promise for a full life and my need for safety. At the same time, my feminine found cracks through which to find expression, namely in awkward sexual experiences, aesthetics, and feminist activism. Digging into the masculine and feminine as archetypes and the increasing fluidity of their expression individually and collectively has led me to believe that Jungian theory might need to catch up with modern women's experiences. At the same time, even though my experience does not match up exactly with the theory, overall it is in alignment with Jung's work. One obstacle is that women and men Jungians have difficulty detaching the feminine and masculine from gender.

In the analysis of my lived experience, I found a connection between my experience of religion and my rejection of the feminine and sexuality. I consider the

implications of what I eventually identified as my patriarchal God wound within the context of my relationship with Phillip. This relationship acted as the vessel for an intense transformational experience that resulted in reconnecting with my feminine in a way that increased my capacity to withstand the vulnerability needed for intimacy. The experiences of intimacy occurred on three different levels, the first having to do with a literal physical relationship. The second level had to do with my relationship with my Self and the third with something transpersonal.

Finally, I explored what Edinger (1975/1984) considers to be Jung's most distinctive feature of the masculine as the drive to become conscious. I agree with Beebe's (Jung, 1989/1996) observation that Jung gave too much credit to the masculine, and I suggest that creating or expanding consciousness requires a partnership between the feminine and the masculine. Rather than receptivity to the light of consciousness being passive and automatic, my lived experience seems to support the notion that being receptive is in fact active. Further, the masculine act of reflection seems to require the quality of being receptive. Inherent in Jung's description of the masculine and feminine is its opposite. This exploration led me to wonder whether it is necessary to symbolize the masculine as male and the feminine as female, and I explored whether the Greek Goddess Artemis might be a good example of the union of feminine and masculine.

Chapter 7

The Body, Vulnerability, Surrender, Receptivity, Union

In this chapter I explore how my experience of reconnecting with the feminine was anything but an intellectual pursuit. Following a period of coming into healthier relationship with my body and sexuality, I was plunged into a relationship with a younger man that became transformative. A first post-divorce relationship full of ironies perhaps made the perfect vessel for the archetypal energies of sexuality and spirituality to mix in a way that contributed to my capacity to withstand vulnerability. As a result, I grew in my capacity to receive sexually and spiritually, which resulted in experiences of intense arousal whether in intimate connection with my partner or in solitude with my Self/God. This makes sense because if the parts of the feminine that have been most in the shadow are the body and sexuality, then it is these parts that need to be related to the most. And, if there was a time when woman's body and sexuality were revered and seen as critical to uniting with the Divine (Eisler, 2011), then reuniting with one's deeper sexuality is an important part of achieving the balance between feminine and masculine, matter and spirit.

The fact that a deeper spirituality and sexuality have remained in my shadow for a long time might explain why they seem to want to project in the most interesting ways. The spiritual and sexual components of my experience were distinct but also difficult to separate. One way this has manifested is in how I experience popular music. Lyrics that are probably mostly understood as referring to a literal love interest are often felt by me to be about a relationship with the Divine. For example, I was surprised when I felt certain that Miley Cyrus' song *Malibu* (Cyrus & Yoel, 2017) was about her relationship

with God and not her fiancé Liam Hemsworth, which is how the song is described. I feel more clarity on how it has been the union of sexuality and spirituality that has allowed connection with what I perceive to be the Divine, but my experience seems to have prompted new questions about the nature and role of the feminine and masculine principles.

Receptivity and Vulnerability

A significant obstacle in coming into relationship with one's sexuality is that it requires the capacity to be vulnerable and receptive, as well as the willingness to surrender to receiving sexual pleasure. This is difficult to do in a culture where the masculine has been distorted and held hostage by a dominator model of social organization. Earlier I spent time grounding this observation in new evidence and theories articulated by Eisler (2011), Gilligan (2018), and Brown (2007). How is a woman to surrender to sexual pleasure if she has a fear of being violated? I did not realize the extent to which my conscious desire for independence, my feminist consciousness raising, and my unconscious patriarchal God wound had interfered in my capacity to receive, especially sexually and spiritually.

For many women, this fear is grounded in lived experience and is conscious; this is not the focus of my analysis. Other women, like me, who have not experienced literal sexual violence, may still carry an unconscious or conscious fear of being violated, which is grounded in the past and present collective experience of women. One of the ways this unconscious fear emerged into consciousness was as a radical belief that all sex with men was somehow violent because the sexual act required a man to penetrate a woman. I was exposed to this perspective as I was coming of age in the 1980s, and I believe this

contributed to my sexual defensiveness. In *Transforming a Rape Culture* (Buchwald, Fletcher & Roth, 1993), Naomi Wolf, in her essay *Radical Heterosexuality . . . or How to Love a Man and Save Your Feminist Soul*, painted a picture that is still relevant today. “All over the country, millions of feminists have a secret indulgence. By day they fight gender injustice; by night they sleep with men . . . Is sleeping with a man ‘sleeping with the enemy’”? (p. 361). Intellectually, I may have set these notions aside as I built a marriage and a family, but the transformative nature of my relationship with Phillip brought it all back to the surface. Only consciousness about my unconscious fear of surrendering allowed me to heal this wound and safely embrace opportunities for surrender to sexual and spiritual pleasure.

In my experience, it was the complete surrender to receiving pleasure that contributed to my capacity to give sexual pleasure. The path to complete surrender though happened through a gift of grace. What I mean by surrender to receiving pleasure is a letting go of the need to *do it right*. My biggest sexual fear after my divorce, which I awkwardly shared with the men with which I was sexual, was what I termed *performance anxiety*. My performance fear did not have to do with pleasing a man; rather it had to do with adequately expressing my pleasure. Similar to my fear of having to reject a man, I feared seeing a man feeling rejected if he was not able to please me. On the other hand, before my marriage, much of my shame had to do with giving pleasure to another, especially if following the sexual experience my partner did not show the kind of love or give me the kind of attention I needed. Interestingly, I did not feel fear or shame during my 24-year marriage. I felt quite safe with my now ex-husband, who for the most part was a great example of a male feminist. However, my marriage was simply an

opportunity to send my shame and wounds into the shadow. Their explosion into consciousness following my divorce acted as the painful initiation into my individuation journey, but these wounds were also the source of my newfound capacity for intimate connection sexually and spiritually.

This issue feels complex and requires the capacity to be vulnerable to even engage in discussion. Given the daily onslaught of media that fuels fear and division between women and men, there exists little space for consciously exploring how to cultivate the capacity for mutual vulnerability and surrender to sexual pleasure. It feels as if there is much more to explore in my personal unconscious, and as I reflect more on the cultural contributions to my sexual and spiritual wounds, I feel more confident that my story, while unique, is not a solitary one.

The Sexual Part of the Journey

My first post-divorce relationship with Phillip was responsible for prompting my journey towards reconciliation with my feminine, specifically through relationship with my body and sexuality. Further, it was this invitation to come into relationship with my body and sexuality that prompted my journey to re-explore my relationship with the Divine. I had already gotten a crash course in applying depth psychology to my lived experience during the breakdown of my marriage. After doing some work on my personal complexes, I suppose I was ready to be both swept up by an initiation into the archetypal realm and maintain some kind of conscious awareness that its ultimate meaning would unfold according to a purpose and timeline of which I had no control. All I could hope for was my having the capacity to manage the tension between being swallowed up by the

experience and my ego getting in the way. The fact that I could not resist the invitation perhaps was an indication that my psyche thought I was ready for what would come next.

Since this chapter aims to communicate my journey of reconnecting with the feminine, I am attempting to share my analysis and insights in a way that reflects the nature of feminine knowing, which includes intuition and the body. Whereas the intellectual and rational nature of the masculine is one way of knowing, it is incomplete and I believe cannot adequately capture what it means to connect with the feminine. It was my relationship with Phillip that feels solely responsible for initiating the reconnection with my feminine. For me it is clear that it was his feminine that invited me to open my heart, embrace the awkwardness required for intimacy, fall in love with my body, and reclaim my sexual power. Specifically, it was his kind spirit, sharing his love for reading and writing poetry, his lingering and non-goal-oriented affection, and capacity to share his wounds that broke me wide open. This man had not even adequately developed his own masculine traits that were needed to be successful in life in a conventional way.

Attraction is mysterious, and our psychological types certainly contributed to the projections that were needed to bring to my attention what was undeveloped in my life. As a budding depth psychologist, I awkwardly asked if he would take the survey to determine his psychological type. He agreed, and I laughed when I researched how his type would interact with mine. He was an ENFP (extraversion, intuition, feeling, perceiving), and I am an INFJ (introversion, intuition, feeling, judging). From the start I was captivated by his unwarranted confidence and entertaining charisma. I also felt I could see through his persona. He was admittedly affectionate, and because our sensing

function was inferior, the physical affection he offered was intense and felt magical for me. I felt drawn in by his capacity to simply wander and meander without purpose, especially as he explored my body; this way of being completely opposed my preference for judging, which has always manifested as a need to have a purpose for the simplest of tasks. The alchemical nature of our relationship was intense and interesting. What I needed most was to come into relationship with my body and sexuality, and it was his passion and affection, which provided the start to that journey. However, it was sexuality that was most natural but also most difficult for him because of his religious beliefs. Our mutual sexual and spiritual wounds seemed to be the basis of what turned out to be a transformative and liberating journey for me. Unfortunately, our experience ended up reinforcing his view that the pleasure of sexuality was only to be enjoyed during marriage, which meant all of his desires had to remain in his shadow.

The most pivotal experiences during my individuation journey did not occur through my intellectual knowing; rather the experiences that brought the most important insights were felt in my body. One thing I noticed in my reading of texts that explore the connection between sexuality and spirituality is the use of what feels like sterile, masculine, and intellectual language even by women writers. Even as many researchers suggest or imply that reconnecting with the feminine means reconnecting with the body and sexuality, the conversation is presented in a very disembodied manner. If we are to understand what it means to reconnect with the feminine through the body and sexuality, it is important to use the language of the body and sexuality.

The initiatory event that prompted my journey to reconnect with the feminine was dramatic:

It was the intuitive sense of being watched that caused me to look up, my body becoming excited with anticipation as my mind wondered whether the confident looking and attractive man my eyes connected with was looking at me. I quickly looked down as I felt both excited and exposed. One voice in me asked, "Is he looking at me?" and another voice dismissed the possibility. Two more times I looked up in nervous anticipation, along with disbelief, that he was looking at me, and I would not believe it until he knelt down in front of my beach chair and said, "I just had to find out what you were reading." I responded, "I'm reading about psychological types."

Looking back, I realize I was done for during this first interaction. It would eventually be understood by me as the beginning of a two-and-a-half year relationship that resulted in the insight that my experience of sexuality was tied to my yearning to connect with the Divine. The journey would unfold in stages, the first being the unleashing of a different kind of passion and experience of sexuality that had hidden itself and lay dormant in me since before my marriage. The second would be coming to experience sexuality on a deeper level, which manifested as increasingly intense experiences of arousal occurring during periods of limited encounters of literal sex. The third stage brought the most intense arousal experiences that had nothing to do with literal sex and felt like surrendering to something that transcended me. This surrendering required the capacity to let go of control and feel vulnerable, which was rewarded with brief experiences of freedom, joy, and merging with my partner's body when I was with him and with the cosmos when I was alone.

The meeting of this man awakened something in me and perhaps because of how long it had hidden itself, it came out in full force. Without the awareness that there was

something deeper going on, not necessarily having to do with mere physical attraction and sex, I might have missed the opportunity to learn the lessons that would contribute to my individuation journey. I interpreted the warning signs, which came in the form of amusing ironies, as opportunities to learn something about myself. It was the embodied experience of connection that inspired my acceptance of this invitation. This experience is difficult to explain, but I believe it is important to attempt to share it in order to help people recognize what it might feel like to reconnect with the feminine, which was felt to be a requirement of reconnecting with the Divine. This means provoking the same kind of bodily experience as initially felt instead of watering down the experience into sterile and neutral intellectual language.

What does it mean to be invited to reconnect with the feminine through the body and sexuality? For me, the invitation seemed to manifest as attraction on multiple levels, so intense that I struggled to describe the experience except by using the common phrase mind-body-soul. But what does this mean and how is it experienced? Author and therapist Anodea Judith (2004), suggests that one way to harness the best of both Eastern and Western cultures for the purpose of evolving human consciousness is to consider that psychology and the chakra system are partners in the path to the Self. In her book, *Eastern Body Western Mind: Psychology and the Chakra System as a Path to the Self*, she ties each chakra to a significant area of psychological health (p. 6). This approach offers balance to a psychological approach, which for me has felt trapped in the masculine intellect. This language offers a way to make more complete sense of what I experienced through this initial encounter because it compensates my intellectual

understanding of what archetypal energies may have been working through me with attention to what was being felt in my body.

Psychologically, I understand that after a long process of exploring my personal complexes, energy was freed up for being receptive to archetypal energy that was looking for expression. This statement though does nothing to help one understand the actual experience, which is embodied or felt through the body. I had already gone through a phase of reconnecting with my body through six months of what I called obsessive online dating. This phase ended abruptly when I decided I had effectively relearned how to relate to men and made significant progress in overcoming my shame around sex. Another reason I ended this dating phase was that the experience produced a heightened sense of excitement so intense I could not sleep. It was after two weeks of letting go of this obsession when Phillip showed up, our meeting occurring at a place of great symbolic importance for me—Bradford Beach. This moment was experienced as the second most intense synchronicity since the event that brought me to study depth psychology, which coincided with the beginning of the end of my marriage.

As I mentioned earlier, the initiatory event seemed to have been orchestrated by the Greek God Hermes. The Trickster energy that flowed through Phillip was so intense and made it impossible for me to resist an invitation to the journey. Once swept up by this initiatory experience, it was even more difficult to resist further invitations. All of what happened next was experienced mostly in and through my body. I like Blackmer's (1989) description of the function of the archetypal Trickster as keeping the door open to the "riches of the instinctual and archetypal world" (p. 18). Blackmer, who is a Jungian analyst, suggests that the growing interest in and even obsession with the body reflects

the need for the flesh to re-emerge into collective consciousness. She reminds us that the significant amount of energy and attention to maintain a masculine dogma reflects a real fear of the feminine (p. 9). This perspective helps to transform my fear of being oppressed into an acknowledgment of my true power as expressed through my body, sexuality, and relationship with the Divine. Judith (2004) offers a complementary way of describing this moment by locating the experience of the synchronicity in the body. This moment catapulted me into the next phase of my individuation journey.

As I think about where in my body I felt the initial connection, three chakras seem to have been activated. One could see this as the curriculum offered by this relationship having to do with healing specific wounds. My description of these chakras does not reflect the order in which they were activated; all three became activated at once: The Sacral Chakra (2nd), which has to do with sexuality and pleasure, the Heart Chakra (4th), which has to do with love, joy, and peace, and the Crown Chakra (7th), which is related to spiritual connection. For me this concept of mind, body, and soul connection could only be understood conceptually until I could locate it in my body. The initial encounter with this man felt like a scene from a dramatic play:

The young man's interest in what I was studying balanced with his lawyerly presentation of his conviction that there were some kind of absolutes amused and challenged me at the same time. When he sat down next to me on the lounge chair, the accidental brush of his hand on my calf caused such arousal that one of the voices in my head said, "Lay me down and kiss me now!" After two hours of playful and dramatic bantering, I said I had to leave to go study, but before I left I asked if I could give him a

hug and expressed how glad I was that I met him. I felt such joy as I skipped away like a little girl.

During this initial encounter my heart beat hard and fast, I gasped inward when his hand touched my calf and his pointing finger ever so slightly came into contact with my chest. I felt intellectually and sexually aroused, and I felt a deep connection with who he was underneath his charismatic persona. Judith (2004) describes the activation of the crown Chakra as moving beyond our personal identity towards connecting with the oneness of being (p. 30). Only by complementing my psychological understanding of this experience with the being of the experience do I feel I have a more complete understanding or knowing about the meaning of the event. It is as if together the masculine intellectual understanding of an event is incomplete without the feminine embodied understanding. Whereas I quickly became aware that there was something archetypal happening through this encounter and our subsequent fast-paced intense daily texting conversations and dates, I only recognized the sexual aspect. I admit I eagerly awaited the literal sexual experience. However, as I recall my body's response during this initial encounter, again the agenda seems to have been present from the beginning, an agenda that went beyond the literal expression of my sexual energy. There was an intuitive knowing that this attraction went beyond the physical. In fact, after our second date, I stated to him that I was finished with online dating and that I had a desire to get to know someone.

Another way to understand what was unleashed through this encounter is through C. G. Jung's theory of archetypes as brought to life through the Greek Gods and Goddesses. In addition to Hermes as Trickster, who was responsible for enticing me into

this new world, The Greek God Dionysus and Goddess Aphrodite seemed to be continuing to seek expression during this part of my journey. In *Dionysus in Exile: On Repression of the Body and Emotion* (2000), Jungian analyst Rafael Lopez-Pedraza describes what it might feel like to have the archetypal energy of the god of wine, madness, and tragedy flow through you. “We encounter a contradictory nature, we encounter irrationality, and it is precisely from this irrationality that Dionysus serves as a metaphorical vehicle for exploring shadowy areas in human nature” (p. 1). Often without a moment’s notice, Dionysus descended upon me during times when I had been trying hard to hold myself together and be responsible during times of great uncertainty. One extra glass of wine or shot of Jagermeister led to the desire to kiss a stranger or put on a pair of sunglasses in a bar and dance for three hours. The eruptions always had to do with sexual desire or dancing. Of course, embarrassment came the next day, and then forgiveness for my harmless expression of pent-up desire before and after my relationship with Phillip. Leading up to and during the unraveling of my marriage, circumstances required that my inner Artemis become exaggerated. Jungian analyst and author of *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women’s Lives* (1984/2014), Jean Shinoda Bolen, describes Artemis as the Greek Goddess of the Hunt and of the Moon, Competitor and Sister (p. 46). I was consciously focusing on stability for my children, a new job, new educational pursuit, all during a two-and-a-half-year period without physical intimacy. If my seriousness became too one-sided and at the expense of my need to express my sexuality and move my body, Dionysus showed up in my body and dreams, and I have learned to laugh when I do not catch on quickly enough. Hermes now is always available to remind me that there is purpose in my seeming transgressions.

During the weeks after the initiatory encounter with Phillip, I became aware of how my interactions with this man were so different from what I had ever experienced. What felt like intense interest in my thoughts and feelings by him brought feelings of acceptance and of being understood. Spontaneous and regular gestures of affection brought feelings of being desired and were matched by an intensity of mutual desire that was new for me. The connection was strong from the beginning, and over time it would come to resemble that kind of irrational connection Murray Stein (1983) speaks of that few couples experience and that is necessary to learn what the relationship has to offer to each person. Interestingly, about a week before the challenges of our relationship emerged, I had what I believe was my first embodied dream. When I awoke, the dream remained not only with my intellect but also in my body. The feeling of complete surrender and safety remained. I would continue to find more and more meaning in this dream, and not until going back and placing the dream within the timeline of the beginning of this relationship did I come to see it as a kind of reassurance that I would come out of this particular relationship experience just fine. Perhaps this dream unconsciously prompted me to continue through the unknown lessons that I would learn. This dream occurred the night before we went hiking, when the first feelings of insecurity emerged, anxiety and panic that I began to feel when sleeping with him, and the revelation of the depth of rigidness of his religious views. The dream:

I was in a restroom at a state park. It was cold, dark, and empty. I had finished going to the bathroom and realized it was completely dark and I could not see my way out of the bathroom. I walked slowly with my hands out in front of me, my feet dragging across the cement floor, until I felt the door. I suddenly was standing in the doorway, my

back facing the outside, and I fell backwards and tumbled down the hill. It was so dark that no matter how wide I opened my eyes, I could see only blackness. Oddly, I felt trusting and my fall was slow and soft. After a few backwards somersaults, I slowed down and then continued falling, this time noticing the soft warm breeze and swirling freshly-fallen leaves that seemed to envelope me on the way down the hill. I felt completely safe and more secure than I had ever felt in my life.

When I awoke my body continued to feel the way it did in the dream, secure and safe.

This dream image captivated me for a long time, and it was so comforting that I attempted to re-experience it over and over until I lost the capacity to do so. Author and body psychotherapist, Margaret Landale (2002), suggests that this kind of embodied experience of an image is particularly powerful because it is being experienced both physically and emotionally (p. 116). The intensity of the physical experience of the image prompted me to draw it and then allow my imagination to add a pair of hands that were cupped as though ready to catch me (See Appendix B). At the time I received this gift of feeling protected by the Great Mother archetype, which came after a period of exploring my mother complex. This image now has an even deeper meaning for me. Whereas I thought the image was helping me make up for lost time when it came to my feeling loved in general, I now see it was infusing my psyche with the capacity to be vulnerable and to surrender to what was to come. Only by feeling loved it seemed could I become open enough to risk experiencing a deeper level of love.

Up until this dream I had found a sense of humor in my newly developed capacity for awkwardness, which was compensated with a humorous sharing each time I felt awkward. Perhaps my humor was a kind of coping mechanism to help me through the

awkwardness that I felt every moment I was with Phillip. Circling back to the dream again has brought even more meaning, this time as I focus on how I describe that I could not see my way out of the bathroom. In the dream I could only feel my way out, with hands stretched out and feet dragging on the floor. Once out the door my eyes would not be of use again, rather it would be my feeling sense that told me I was safe. This dream seems to have been giving me permission to set my rational intellect aside in favor of an experience that would require trust in my feminine knowing, especially through my body. Falling down the hill could symbolize the dramatic falling in love I would experience, but it was more than that. The falling in love also had to do with surrendering to the transcendent.

Perhaps armed with this newly developed capacity for awkwardness and the message from my unconscious that I would not only survive what was coming next, but that I would be able to safely integrate the experience, the challenges began to come within the week. The first came in the form of my partner's visible exasperation and confusion about how I could be a moral person without a specific religious framework.

After a few drinks one night and as we sat in his car in front of my house, he put his hands to his head and looked so confused. I don't remember what he said next, but I left the car angry. An apology from him came swiftly the next day, but within the week I returned the favor. "How can you believe the Earth was created in seven days?" I asked. My apology came the next day. The same week he shared that he felt conflicted about having sex outside of marriage and asked if I was still interested in hanging out with him. The experience of this moment:

The news that my new romantic partner had a conflict about having sex outside of marriage felt devastating. My recently unleashed sexual energy had all of a sudden been sent back underground, but when asked if I still wanted to hang out with him, I felt weak, devastated, angry, but automatically replied, “Yes.” Perhaps intuitively I knew there was something more to this relationship than literal sex.

I consciously wondered about the irony of having finally found and being able to express a healthy sexuality with being attracted to a millennial man that struggled morally with having sex outside of marriage. I now see Hermes at work here as the Trickster who arranged an event that acted as an invitation to explore sexuality on a deeper level related to spirituality. A journal entry of two weeks later states that I need to reflect about how sexual experience affects our spiritual unfolding. At that time, the two classes *Psyche and Eros: The Psychology and Mythology of Relationships* and *Somatic Depth Psychology: The Psyche/Soma Connection* together seemed to present a framework for wrestling with my new experiences. I was well aware of the synchronicity of the relationship and the two classes, and a subsequent journaling about my most intense attractions during my life unearthed a connection between these attractions and my desire to be in relationship with the Divine. This man plunged me into a world of passion and then seemed to put the brakes on through his admission of his conflict of having sex outside of marriage. It was conventional sexuality that pulled me in, but then after I was hooked, my spiritual and sexual growth would unfold in an unexpected manner. I would feel more sexually alive without literal sex, and this would contribute to my openness about the connection between my sexual and spiritual paths.

He did not do abstinence perfectly, but for the most part there was no penetration. This limitation became a blessing in disguise, because I learned about the world of “no-sex sex”, which seemed for him to include everything except penetration. This opportunity for sustained arousal as he explored my body led to a pivotal experience as well as to my growing curiosity about the connection between sexuality and spirituality. As I look back, I realize that most of the affection was in the form of his exploring my body and not the other way around. Perhaps my first task was to learn how to receive openly and without being self-conscious. On one occasion I experienced this spontaneous image emerging:

We lay in my bed, clothed on the bottom and naked on top. I lay on top of his body, which was face down. We were just relaxing. All of a sudden, the image of Phillip between my legs emerged, and then the image of him turned into a giant red snake that entered me. Embarrassment turned into surrender and the willingness to be vulnerable as the giant snake entered and disappeared inside me. I was aware of my arousal, which was so intense I could have been brought to orgasm if I moved slightly. My awareness left me confused, and I kept this experience to myself for a long time. At the time I believed this to be a private experience of connection with a very ancient feminine.

This was my first experience of sexuality as something symbolic rather than literal and not tied to orgasm or intercourse. I knew this experience was a pivotal moment in my life, but psychological concepts and intellectual language could not adequately capture the meaning of the experience. Michael Mirdad (2007), recognized by many as a world-renowned spiritual teacher, author, and healer, in his book *Sacred Sexuality: A Manual for Living Bliss*, describes the experience of kundalini as the feminine deity Shakti,

symbolized by the serpent, awakening from her slumber seeking to reunite with the masculine deity Shiva (p. 112). He suggests that kundalini energy is a life force, of which sexuality is only a part. Being on the verge of orgasm in a state of stillness brought me into contact with the source of life. The bodily connection with my partner seemed to act as a doorway to the deeper experience rather than the source of the experience.

Soon after, as I considered what to write my paper on for the *Psyche and Eros* class (on the psychology and mythology of romantic love), and after journaling about all of the attractions I had experienced during my life, I was surprised to find that my most intense attractions contained a thread having to do with seeking God. The myth of Psyche and Eros has been difficult for me to integrate, but when I read Mirdad's (2007) description of the myth as the union of spirituality and sexuality, it makes sense that it was during this class that I came to the realization that there was a connection between my journey of sexuality and yearning to connect with the Divine. It was an embodied experience of union that led to my understanding of the meaning of the birth of Pleasure, the name of the girl-child that was the result of the union of Psyche and Eros (p. 41).

This makes sense because reconciling with the feminine requires reconciling with the capacity to relate, with the body, and with sexuality, all parts of what it means to be human that have been dismissed and devalued by patriarchal systems, especially patriarchal religions like Christianity. I continue to reflect about whether my partner played the role of anima or animus for me, or whether it was his anima or animus because my experience does not seem to match up with the theories of C. G. Jung and first-generation Jungians. It is the experience with Phillip that opened me up to the chaos and volcano of passion from which my over-developed masculine had been protecting me. It

was within the confines of a subsequent 22-month period of significant distance and limited physical contact between my partner and me in which I experienced both the deeper levels of soul and higher levels of ecstasy that David Deida (2002/2005) describes. I was not prepared for my response to the sudden separation with Phillip:

The separation was unexpected and left me confused. I intellectually received this as a sign that our relationship was meant to come to an end and I would appreciate it for what it was, a gift that brought me closer to my feminine, my body, and my sexuality.

During the next six weeks I found myself intensely engaged in physical activities, as well as reconnecting sexually with a man from my past. One particular evening, I decided to walk home from my neighborhood restaurant, and when I got caught in a thunderstorm, I laughed out loud and skipped home, breathing heavy, my heart beating so hard, drenched by the time I got home. Realizing the next day my body was busy processing something, the insight that I loved this man exploded out of my unconscious as I unwillingly yelled out in my garden, "Ok, I love him. Shit."

I knew I had to see something through and I did not know how it would go, but it was another invitation from my feminine that I had to accept.

Surrender

As I became more comfortable with being vulnerable, I began to have experiences of what I would describe as complete surrender and receptivity to love and creative energy. The first experience followed the watching of a Christian movie called *The War Room* (Kendrick, S. & Wheeler, 2015), which had an unexpectedly profound effect on me. I typically would not seek out a Christian movie, but when Phillip suggested I might like it, my intuition said there was something in it for me, although it would not turn out

to be what he might have hoped. The movie, which was about an average family struggling through the everyday challenges of modern life, brought to life what it might look and feel like to take back a projection from a romantic partner and to surrender to the Self, or God in this case. There were two specific scenes which connected with me deeply, the first the wife's declaration that her contentment would not be dependent upon her husband's behavior and as she shifted the burden for fixing her husband to God through prayer, she was able to detach from its impact on her and love him through his struggle. The taking back of her projection from him led to his accepting responsibility for his bad behavior and expressing regret and the need to be forgiven by his wife.

Feeling deeply moved by this concept, still mostly understood intellectually, I purchased the accompanying book *The Battle Plan for Prayer: From Basic Training to Targeted Strategies* (Kendrick, S. & Kendrick, A., 2015). My morning ritual now included reading a section of the book each day, accompanied by prayer, which was new for me. Halfway through the book I had a fully embodied experience of what I can only describe as full surrender of everything that had ever weighed me down given over to something that transcended the literal me. The experience was one of mind, body, and soul that I would describe as a kind of relief of and from my intellect, a stirring of my soul, and arousal so intense I had to relieve myself with an orgasm. During this time I was also working on cultivating an openness to images from my unconscious, and there was a clear image that accompanied this bodily experience, that of pure intense light. Interestingly, I could not decide whether I was receiving the light into my head or if the light was emanating from my head (See Appendix D); perhaps it was both. I came to feel that my surrender resulted in a capacity to receive. The very next day when I had the

same experience, the image that presented itself was that of a golden chalice. When I drew the chalice, I added blue sapphire stones on the base and on the part of the chalice that holds liquid (See Appendix D). I drew an intense yellow light emanating from inside the cup. I began to make a connection between surrender and receptivity, meaning that in order to develop a capacity to receive, one must be able to surrender or empty oneself in order to make room for something new to be received.

During this time, I also became obsessed with existing in the world as love. Now I believe this image had to do with my growing capacity to receive and then give sexually. I cannot seem to separate the spiritual and sexual components of the arousal I felt in several instances. The arousal I felt during times of spontaneous images like this was sexual, and the arousal I felt during times where the boundary blurred between Phillip and me felt spiritual.

Over the next couple months, I had a few dreams that I now can see reflected something important happening in my unconscious as well as how I was integrating these experiences. One of those dreams contained images of steps calling me down to join others as if there was a social gathering going on. When I drew the dream, I added a lamp and a note that said *too steep* (Appendix E). A couple months later, I had another bodily experience during my morning meditation where I felt an intense feeling of receptivity, accompanied by the need to orgasm because of the intense arousal. My drawing of the image was of a beautiful bowl, decorated with bright yellow stones and the inside color also being yellow. The words I wrote next to the image were *openness, receptivity, arousal, prayer, and asking for help* (Appendix F). Shortly after these dreams, I drew an image of a flower, sunshine, bird and ladybug, but I drew it onto disassembled puzzle

pieces, accompanied by the statement *feeling like I'm being dis-assembled and re-assembled* (Appendix G).

The dream I had the next month seems to have rounded out a sort of curriculum for me that included the embrace of my feminine, which allowed my wounded masculine to let go of control and surrender in order to receive what my psyche or the Divine had to offer in the way of purpose for my life. This last dream brought back the image of steps, but this time I had climbed the steps and in my drawing noted that *I didn't realize how high I'd climbed until I looked down when I got to the top* (Appendix H). It is important to note that during this time, circumstances prevented me from being able to be physically intimate with Phillip, but I have come to see how my connection with him had begun to transcend our literal physical intimacy. During this separation, I experienced the most intense spiritual arousal, which I believe contributed to my capacity to surrender enough to fully receive what he had to offer sexually when we reunited, even if only for six weeks. During our initial eight-month dating period, he opened me up to passion, and then we were separated for 22 months, this period filled with intense arousal related to the connection between my sexuality and spirituality. Something significant had happened during this separation, which culminated in my new capacity to both receive and give sexually with Phillip when we reunited.

This time, I was lying on top of him, both of us fully naked, and my intense presence led to a feeling of merging with Phillip and with everything. I could not feel where either of our bodies began or ended.

It was not the climax of orgasm that brought this sense of union (there was no orgasm), but the attention to *being* instead of doing that caused the merging. Contrary to fearing

that I might lose myself, I felt part of everything. During the six weeks of bliss when we lived together following the separation, I came into my own sexually, as I not only was able to fully receive but also give sexual pleasure. I was surprised by my desire to please my man. Interestingly, it was a mere two weeks later when this relationship came to an abrupt end, the circumstances being so odd that I had to give credit to Hermes once again as my constant guide.

The Spiritual Part of the Journey

At the start of my depth psychology education, I excitedly began applying depth psychological concepts to my personal life, and there was an underlying feeling of sacredness and mystery. I began sharing with others that depth psychology was my spiritual practice without knowing exactly what that meant. If the way in which we come into relationship with God is through the Self, then I suspect I intuitively knew that alongside exploring and coming into relationship with my unconscious was a journey to what the Self would allow me to experience when it came to God. Even though I rejected my childhood religion, I was aware as a young adult that I was searching for something to take its place, and I became part of a movement of people who consider themselves spiritual but not religious. Edward Edinger (1975/1984) captures this tension between believers and non-believers, which lays beneath the surface of consciousness in most cases. The religious believer fears admitting their doubt in faith, and the non-believer fears admitting there is something missing without a faith. Perhaps the third has manifested in this notion of *spiritual but not religious* and is part of the working out of what feels like irreconcilable opposing positions. Personally, I continue to confirm that I cannot go back to a conventional religious framework, but I am conscious that without a

relationship to the Divine, my life loses a sense of meaning. For many, being spiritual means having a reverence for the interconnectedness of all of creation but not being attached to a specific dogma or religious framework. For years I sought out books and experiences that exposed me to other religious traditions and at the same time became interested in mindfulness and yoga, practices that seek to increase a sense of stillness and awareness. I came to see all of life as interconnected and looked for the highest principles in everything, but when pressed I could not articulate a belief system except to say that if everything is interconnected then harming others was harming ourselves.

Now I would consider this part of my spiritual journey as the masculine hero's journey, because for the most part I was searching outside of myself as well as for concepts that could be articulated through words. It was not until I began to study depth psychology and embrace the study of my inner world that I began to experience spirituality and interconnectedness in a more embodied way. Ultimately it was the marriage of an inner awareness and sexuality that brought embodied experiences of union. This experience of union seemed to require a process of coming into relationship with my inner world and my sexual energy in order to achieve the kind of spiritual bliss that I enjoyed on a few occasions. One could see this as the working together of the masculine and the feminine that led to a religious experience that transcended the literal. It was not until my study of somatic depth psychology that I realized I was limiting myself by habitually using my masculine energy and rational intellect to explore my inner world. Even though my psychological type of INFJ suggests I am a feeling person, it was not until I was exposed to somatic depth psychology that something cracked open inside me and unleashed a new embodied awareness. My feeling function had manifested

as an inability to set proper boundaries with others, the origin of this complex being my feeling responsible as a child for my mother's happiness. It was not until this transformative relationship that I came into relationship with my own feelings, which were stored in my body. This new lens led to my finding a thread throughout my life of relationships that illuminated an unconscious desire to come into relationship with the Divine.

At the time I discovered this thread I considered the path to my Self, the Divine, and to my sexuality to be somewhat linear and distinct. I have come to understand and appreciate how they intertwine with one another. With new consciousness about this interdependence, I now have words to describe the deeper motive that was working through my strongest attractions, even those that occurred at a very young age (Deida, 2002/2005, p. 166). I can now see how even my earliest intense attractions were invitations for me to connect both with parts of me and with the Divine through another person. Not being able to relate to or receive what had been offered through a particular religious framework, perhaps my body became a more suitable vessel through which to connect with the source. This reflects Deida's suggestion that without feeling the Divine in the body, it carries no meaning (p. 119). What I felt from the religious dogma of my childhood was shame and emptiness. It was the embodied experience of being swept up in the attraction to Phillip that opened the door to once again explore my spirituality. This time perhaps an unconscious motive was to be able to articulate and bring form to my unique personal framework for relating to the Divine. Instead of feeling defensive about not fitting into someone else's framework, and insecure in my inability to articulate my

own beliefs, my embodied experiences have reassured me that I do in fact have a relationship with the source of all.

This relationship led to intellectual and embodied experiences that brought sexuality and spirituality together for me. Bruce Tallman (2005), professional spiritual director, marriage counselor and author of *Archetypes for Spiritual Direction*, offers a framework for thinking about the archetypal hero/heroine qualities needed to be an effective spiritual leader. In thinking about his four archetypes of Sovereign, Warrior, Seer, and Lover, the Lover archetype was expressed through Phillip and cast a spell that I could not resist (p. 20). I was well aware that my partner and our relationship were being used for my spiritual growth, and I cautioned Phillip with light humor and humility that the outcome was not likely to match his expectation. He never admitted to having a fantasy that he would bring me over to his side, but it was present. I agree with Tallman's suggestion that archetypes are like gifts from God, but only if one has an ability to consider their intense experiences symbolically and not just literally (p. 25). This is interesting in my case, because Phillip saw himself as a kind of a spiritual guide for me; he thought he was qualified because of his literal understanding of the Bible. I adamantly expressed many times that it was the alchemical nature of our relationship, not what I considered to be his rigid beliefs that provided my spiritual curriculum. In the end Phillip seemed emasculated by my insistence that only God knew the true purpose of our relationship, and it likely was not what he thought it would be. My awareness that archetypal energies were working through our relationship perhaps prevented me from projecting onto this man the responsibility for my spiritual growth, although this might have given meaning to his life. Instead I was open to having God work through this man,

which allowed me to let go of any expected outcomes about the future of our relationship (de Castillejo, 1973/1997, p. 109).

Love: Aphrodite as Holy Spirit

For some reason this man opened me up to a real connection with him, but I suspect it was the transcendent third that facilitated the experience, which de Castillejo (1973/1997) describes as the Holy Spirit, that made the meeting possible (p.120). From the start, I knew both the beginning and end of our relationship were out of our hands. In *Knowing Woman* (1973/1997), the author illuminates a complex relationship between God and human beings, and the role of love in facilitating the connection. She suggests:

(a) The source of love is God, but she does not say that God is love; (b) Where there is love, the Self is the link between the two soul mates; and (c) The Self is also the bridge to the Divine. What is it that allows one to cross the bridge to the Divine, and what is it that acts as the connector to each Self. Crossing and connecting are movements that require some kind of energy. The source of the Holy Spirit is also God. Perhaps both the Holy Spirit and Love facilitate the relationship between human beings and God. De Castillejo refers to this third thing that holds all of this together as Holy Spirit (p. 129), but I wonder if the Holy Spirit and Love are just two different ways to refer to the same substance or energy. It makes me wonder if Love is the Holy Spirit, as reflected in de Castillejo's suggestion that love is a miracle that happens by grace, not by our own will (p. 116). Consciousness about an archetypal or third presence in the attraction contributes to the capacity to surrender to the mysterious meaning of the relationship and lessens the anxiety related to what ultimately will happen with the relationship (Deida, 2002/2005, p. 104).

It is as if that mysterious third that causes the attraction—Holy Spirit or Aphrodite—is like a whisper that one may or may not hear. If the whisper is heard, the choice to act may feel like accepting an invitation to a dangerous adventure. The film *Room In Rome* (Medem & Longoria, 2010) effectively captures this moment of decision. Given the timing of my viewing of this film, I believe it brought awareness of the simultaneous movement of sexuality and spirituality. The scene of the film is a hotel room in Rome, which acts as a vessel for the transformative experience of two women who happened to meet after leaving a conference. As they found themselves walking to their respective hotels, one woman invites the other to her room. There is a definite feeling of psychological risk and danger as the one woman, who we find out later is engaged to be married, accepts the invitation of the other woman, who later shares she is a lesbian. Perhaps it is not an accident that the scene of this transformation, which brings together sexuality and spirituality, takes place in Rome, the literal location of the male hierarchical leadership of the Roman Catholic Church and the symbolic center of the persistence of the male dominated Catholic version of Christianity. The room is located in a historic hotel and feels like a sacred place as the camera complements the imagery of intense lovemaking scenes with those of the classical paintings on the ceiling and walls. The room feels like a place of reverence and love. The 10 hours the women are together are filled with alternating triggered complexes and projections, followed by intense love making, followed by psychological and spiritual growth in the form of increasingly deep relatedness. In my mind this film is not about lesbian love but instead illustrates symbolically how reconnecting with the feminine may require reconciling sexuality and spirituality through embodied experience.

Before the male Holy Spirit of Christianity that de Castillejo (1973/1997) describes as Love, there was Aphrodite, The Greek Goddess of love and beauty. In *Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives* (2014), Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen captures the complexity of this Goddess who expresses the values of creation, whether procreation of our species or creation and appreciation of beautiful ideas, artwork, music, intellectual theories, flower gardens, or relationships (p. 233). Immediately, I am drawn to the conflicting stories of the birth of Aphrodite as outlined by Bolen:

In Homer's version, Aphrodite had a conventional birth. She was simply the daughter of Zeus and a sea nymph, Dione. In Hesiod's version, Aphrodite was born as a consequence of a violent act. Cronos (who later became the ruler of the Titans and father of the first-generation Olympians) took a sickle, cut off the genitals of his father Uranus and threw them into the sea. White foam spread around them as sperm and sea mixed, from which Aphrodite was born, emerging from her oceanic conception as a fully-grown goddess. (p. 234)

The birth of the Goddess of Love being the result of a violent act reflects what Eisler (2011) illustrates as the co-opting of myths by the evolving dominator model of social organization. It is not difficult to imagine that what might come after would be the Christian myth where the feminine is not required except as a passive vessel for the birth of Christ. However, as the feminine is an archetype, no efforts will be successful in permanently banishing her. In the Christian myth, Mary did choose to carry the future manifestation of an evolved God-image, which changed humanity's relationship with God. Both men and women were affected by Aphrodite's erotic influence, she had a

husband but no children with him, and liaisons with other Gods, such as Hermes and Ares, and mortals, bearing several children with them, including her son Eros. Bolen (1984/2014) describes the Aphrodite archetype in women as their “enjoyment of love and beauty, sexuality, and sensuality (p. 238), which if not balanced with the energy of another Goddess such as Artemis, Hestia, or Hera, may lead to disaster in the form of passionate but unprotected sex, unhealthy relationships, or misunderstandings by men and women about her intentions.

Today many professional women may have an over-developed sense of Artemis, Hestia, and Hera, leaving their Aphrodite atrophied. During the first part of my life, I now see I pursued all the areas of my life as if I was implementing a business plan. I seemed to apply the more masculine approach needed in my work as a professional to other areas of my life. Even date night seemed to be part of a plan instead of being motivated by a more irrational desire for spontaneous intimacy and connection. The one part of my life where Aphrodite seemed to emerge was with my children. I experienced the strongest sense of being purely present with my children, especially on the two days of the week that I did not work and that were devoted especially to connecting with them. My conversations with women friends and colleagues lead me to believe that the masculine focus on goals and achievement had invaded spaces that were once the domain of Aphrodite.

I appreciate the author’s distinction between Aphrodite’s energy being about the need for sexual intimacy only versus being activated through relationship. This helps me make sense of being swept up with the desire to carry a child with Phillip, a desire that I immediately recognized as symbolic because it was so ridiculous. At the time, I was 53

years old and sending my second child to college, and this man was 35. Even now I am not sure of the symbolic meaning of the desire, except that I felt an intensity of love I had not felt before. The love I felt for Phillip, which grew during our 22-month separation, was free of the feeling of obligation or responsibility. It was just pure love. Perhaps the desire to make a baby with him and to carry his child had to do with his representing the feminine for me. Perhaps in making a baby with him I would be giving birth to my own feminine. To want a baby because of desire for this man is in complete contrast to how I actually felt when I started my family. My desire to start my literal family did not emerge out of my desire for my husband, but perhaps reflects Bolen's description of the desire to have a baby being motivated by the archetype of Demeter, the Greek Goddess of Grain, Nurturer, and Mother. "She represents maternal instinct fulfilled through pregnancy or through providing physical, psychological, or spiritual nourishment to others" (Bolen, 1984/2014, p. 171). Whereas my now ex-husband did not have strong feelings about when or whether to have children, I did feel compelled at a certain time in my life to have children.

Whereas my inner Aphrodite as intense sexual desire only emerged recently, her intense desire to become engrossed in those things that fascinated her was always there, especially when it came to ideas, advocacy, and connecting with people in general, but especially men. Just because sex with other men was off limits during my marriage, I was aware of the erotic energy during many interactions with men that revolved around intellectual ideas for example. I appreciate Bolen's description of Aphrodite as a "force for change" (Bolen, 1984/2014, p. 241), which is in alignment with my insatiable desire to create with purpose. Certain people are attracted to being with me I believe because I

usually have no agenda other than to connect in a meaningful way. I laugh at Bolen's perfect description of how Phillip, who I could not resist, seemed to be the embodiment of Hermes. He captured my heart, mind, and soul. "A Hermes type can be a trickster, a bit of a con man He's full of potential, often very talented though undisciplined, charismatic, and not committed to work or to her" (pp. 249-250). It is significant for my individuation journey that the child born of "Aphrodite's union with Hermes was the bisexual god Hermaphroditus, who inherited the beauty of both parents, bore both their names, and had the sexual characteristics of both" (p. 235). My relationship with Phillip, who seemed to embody the archetypal energy of Hermes, acted as a vessel that facilitated the reconnection to my feminine and the Divine. Perhaps the birth of this union was the purpose and limit of this relationship. Not long after the most intense experience of union came the beginning of the end of the relationship.

The moment Phillip withdrew emotionally was subtle but felt dramatic. Initially, my heart hurt at the intuitive understanding that something had ended, and sitting with this feeling in solitude quickly caused me to realize that I had become dependent on him for feeling loved. Over the next few days I went back and forth between resistance and surrender. An argument about religion led to my realization that I could not reconcile my need for depth with his attachment to rigid views. Surrendering to my fear made me realize that I had been able to feel love and union that transcended the person through whom it was delivered. I felt devastated at the intuitive knowing—he did not seem to be conscious of this—he did not love me anymore, but knowing that ultimately this relationship was not in our hands. It felt as if this relationship offered me the curriculum needed to develop my capacity to surrender first to love and sexual intimacy, while at the

same time learning to detach from the forms meant to facilitate the curriculum, the ultimate purpose being to come into more direct relationship with the Divine (Bolen, 1984/2014, p. 79).

I wonder about de Castillejo's (1973/1997) suggestion that love enters our lives only upon the meeting of the opposites (p. 576). This perhaps is reflected in the intensity of attraction between couples who embody certain opposing energies, and this was certainly the case with this man. Without awareness of the need for each person to develop the opposing traits, these couples often eventually resent the other for those same traits they found attractive in the beginning and little spiritual growth occurs. Even with awareness on my part about the mysterious workings of our unconscious, our relationship ended due to these same differences. Who is to say though whether the spiritual growth intended by the Self, the Holy Spirit, or Aphrodite did not occur for Phillip as it did for me, as my therapist reminded me several times. The experience of our relationship is now a permanent part of his psyche. For me, there was great purpose and meaning in this relationship, so much so that I am a completely different person on a journey of finding a new purpose in life. I cannot say what the relationship did for Phillip, but that is not my responsibility. I appreciate Deida's (2002/2005) suggestion that holiness is not about doing things perfectly but in recognizing that we are fallible and it is denial that leads to sin (p. 66).

Union With and Reconciliation of Opposites

Until now, not feeling loved is how I have been describing my experience of childhood, which is not to be confused with the knowledge that I was loved. As I continued to identify and attempt to come into relationship with my complexes, I claimed

them by naming them, and this one I named my love wound. After spiraling back to my insight about seeking the Divine through relationship, I would now describe my childhood experience as lonely. Referring to C. G. Jung's (1921/1971) theory of psychological types I considered earlier, I came to understand that my introverted intuitive nature resulted in a mysterious, powerful, and overwhelming pull into my inner world. Studying depth psychology liberated and brought out what I affectionately call an addiction to depth, but now I can imagine or maybe even remember how this intense pull into the inner may have been compensated by a compulsion to seek deep connection with others. Perhaps the loneliness of the task also compelled me to compensate by developing into someone who purposely sought out opportunities to engage in activities that were energizing for the typical extravert. Perhaps the overwhelming pull of my inner world and its accompanying loneliness caused me to run the other way, and I was searching for someone to save me from being swallowed up by my own inner world.

For much of my life I have had moments where I am unable to look into someone's eyes or when someone is taking a photo of me I become so self-conscious that my eyes water and I physically cannot keep them open for the picture. A photographer compassionately suggested that having one's picture taken is like allowing one to see your soul. I wonder if my intense need to go deep within is a type of homecoming for me. Whereas I attempted to escape my inner world by becoming an extravert, perhaps my Self attempted to engage me through these attractions that felt so intense. This makes sense as my psychological type INFJ, which means my sensing function is inferior in relation to my intuition. My reactions to external stimulus are often awkwardly exaggerated. I cannot resist touching the walls in hotel lobbies, for example, because I am

curious about the texture. My feelings were so intense for Phillip that when we lay together in bed I felt the desire to crawl inside him.

My first attraction was to Doug, a fellow fifth grader, at the Catholic elementary school where I came to experience the humiliation and shame that many others can relate to in their religious experience. I sat across from this boy and as I reflect about my inability to look him in the eye, I believe perhaps it was because I could not handle the depth with which I wanted to connect with him. As Jean Shinoda Bolen (1995/2014) suggests, these attractions are invitations to engage the pieces of ourselves that have been neglected or are undeveloped (p. 189). Having a framework for exploring the symbolic meaning behind these attractions at such a young age is important. I have a faint memory of this boy and me hiding out in the supply room and getting in trouble for that. The event now seems to be the first where an intense attraction to someone was accompanied by negative religious experience. Somehow two experiences became intertwined, that of an intense attraction and religious shame because of being scolded.

My next intense attraction was to Adam, a fellow student at a Catholic middle school, but unlike the condemnation and judgment I felt at my prior school, this school was full of unconditional love and provided the foundation for my taking the risks needed to develop into the person I sought to become. I also could not develop any kind of relationship with what I did not know was my budding intense sexual desire and what it might have meant. Interestingly, that kind of attraction went underground for a time, and instead I passively went through some motions with a couple high school guys but said no to actual sex.

After high school, I felt compelled to express my pent-up sexuality. Over the next year I would freely have sex but without the deep connection I believe I unconsciously sought. That is until my next intense attraction to a student in college named Tom. The attraction was even more intense than for the seventh-grade boy, and even though I felt as awkward as ever, I could not resist the urge to do what I could to get his attention. Having become sexually active in the meantime, I became hungry for physical intimacy with him. I remembered him as a polite gentleman and a religious person and I still have no memory of having been sexually intimate with Tom. Rather, I ended up internalizing a sense of rejection of my perceived promiscuity. My memories of throwing myself at him and being politely rejected caused much shame and humiliation that stayed in my body until recently, when we oddly happened to reconnect. He shattered this story I had been telling myself. One of the ways I attempted to connect with him in college was by reading this little New Testament book. I did not ever tell him I was doing this, but I suspect this was a way I was trying to know him. I was digging and searching for something through my desperate attempt to connect with him. Oddly, 25 years would have to pass until learning that he was overwhelmed by the love he felt for me. He kindly released me from my shame through his admission and became a spiritual companion. It was not until my relationship with Phillip that I felt that kind of soulful and physical attraction again. Before this, I would in a way go through the motions and follow along when men pursued me. I now know that there are different types of love and to feel the kind of connection I felt with these few men is rare and wonderful. If only I had had a framework to experience and reflect upon these attractions in a more symbolic manner,

something author Jean Shinoda (1995/2004) Bolen offers in her book *Crossing to Avalon: A Woman's Midlife Quest for the Sacred Feminine*.

Being armed with some depth psychology tools and awareness that I was experiencing a midlife crisis did not save me from being swept up in what I would now call archetypal forces. I made it through divorce, and then after a brief settling down, my sexual energy was unleashed and found all sorts of victims on which to project. During the six-month period of obsessive online dating, I knew I needed to find an outlet for this pent up energy, which felt like an animal need. At the time I would share with others that I was practicing relating to men. I was aware that one version of me was dying and another one was emerging, but I was stuck in between the two, anxious and feeling ungrounded. This anxiety was accompanied by an intense childlike energy that manifested as spontaneous cartwheels on the beach, skipping down the sidewalk as I listened to Pandora on my headphones, and oversharing that resembled those embarrassing things that children say. Murray Stein (1983), author of *In Midlife*, captures perfectly what looks and feels like compulsive and irrational emotions and behaviors that can overtake one during this period of liminality (p. 93). Being aware that this was happening to me, I expressed to others often that I felt like a teenager and that my OkCupid dating was an obsession. My children were amused and confused at who I had become as they watched my excitement about going on a date. I did not even recognize myself when I was swept up by the uncontrollable desire to have sex with a man who was a friend of the owner of a bar I frequented often at the time. I was not attracted to him, but I could not resist the lure of the potential danger in going to his place and quickly having sex and then leaving. We both looked at each other and agreed we needed that. I

left feeling proud of myself that I could check *one-night stand* off the list. Luckily my ego was strong enough during this time to put some precautions in place in the form of reports to my sister about where I was during each date. I felt set free to experience what I had not experienced earlier in my life.

As Stein (1983) suggests, the space between my rejected persona and the unknown future became a doorway through which unexpressed archetypal energies emerged (p. 83). Looking back, I can see that these psychic forces of sexuality and spirituality had an agenda all their own and orchestrated the event that plunged me into what became my first post-divorce relationship and a two-and-a-half-year journey of dramatic sexual and spiritual growth. I was not looking for a soulmate, but it quickly became clear that this relationship with Phillip represented the potential reconciling of multiple sets of opposites (p. 93). The intensity of our first meeting and mutual attraction told me there was some kind of projection going on, but I simply enjoyed the experience of passionate affection.

After years of feeling so responsible and independent, I shared with Phillip that all I wanted at this point in my life was to feel like *a girl*. At the same time, I was excited to apply my new depth psychological lens to my own crazy experience, and I became curious about the meaning behind our attraction. I laughed out loud when I discovered our psychological types made us either the perfect or the worst match. This was the first pair of opposites that clearly needed to be addressed in me. He was an ENFP, reflected in his charisma, desire to meander, to engage in banter, his insatiable desire for external stimulus, and his intense need to give and receive affection. Further, he described himself as undisciplined, spent more money than he should, and had few future plans. As an

INFJ, I pretended to be an extravert to cover up my shy and insecure self. With an emphasis on judging, I rarely did things without a purpose, except when I let my inner child out to play beach volleyball. I was also addicted to finding meaning in everything, which manifested as intense seriousness. I became open to his influence and experienced a lot of joy during our dating phase, even moments of being irresponsible by staying up too late and going into work with a hangover—at age 51. I knew that part of the curriculum this relationship offered me was to embrace my child energy and to enjoy the kind of affection I had not been able to experience before.

Exploring psychological type was like child's play compared to the next set of opposites that would present themselves through our relationship. I met Phillip during the writing of the paper that would determine whether I would be accepted into the PhD program at Pacifica. The paper reflected my attempt to understand Jung's theory of anima and animus, which I grappled with through the embodied experience of watching a film that for me represented the reconciling of the masculine and feminine. This concept was difficult for me and I came to see this relationship as a way of helping me work this out. I noticed that Phillip seemed to have a very easy relationship with his feminine, and I saw myself as having a one-sided relationship with my masculine at the expense of my feminine. His zest for life that included no goals, his love for reading and writing poetry, his capacity for unlimited physical affection without the need for orgasm all opposed my linear, goal-oriented, and intellectual approach to life. I experienced the film *In Your Eyes* (Hill, 2014) as a simplified version of the stereotyped feminine and masculine. As I wrestled with C. G. Jung's theory of the anima and animus, this film helped me realize that my lived experience did not match Jung's theory. The film presented the feminine

and masculine in a very stereotyped and gendered manner through its characters, but the storyline made it impossible to determine whether the masculine and feminine characters ultimately were separate characters or simply components of a single psyche. The film's value for me was the initial clear separation of the masculine and feminine, which were presented as stereotyped and gendered images, which made clear their subsequent reunion into a single psyche.

The next set of opposites to present themselves had to do with spirituality. It became clear Phillip had not been with a woman like me before, a woman who was independent, professional, and guided by strong moral principles but not attached to a religious framework. Suddenly, he was exasperated at my lack of a religious framework as motivation for my approach to life. I knew there was irony in my being attracted to someone who was on the other end of the spectrum when it came to spirituality, and instead of running away I considered this an opportunity to work on my tolerance for others with different views. This turned out to be the wrong lesson I was to learn through our relationship.

At this time, a third set of opposites would emerge having to do with sexuality. After unleashing my sexuality during my online dating phase and then being swept up in an attraction that I never felt before, Phillip shared with me his conflict over having sex outside of marriage. Inside I was devastated as I let him know I still wanted to be with him. He would not always be consistent in staying true to this belief, but this boundary turned into a doorway for me to experience true sexual connection that was not tied to the ultimate goal of penetration and orgasm. This boundary offered me the opportunity to grow in my appreciation for touch, physical embrace, kissing, and exploring someone's

body for hours. Letting go of the need for or anticipation of being penetrated, caused me to simply be present with another person.

Within the first three months into our relationship, all of these pairs of opposites emerged. It was through intense physical and soulful attraction that I discovered the relationship between my sexuality and spirituality. It was through sexuality that I discovered that connection with the Divine feminine requires my embrace of my body and sexuality. I am not sure if this coming together of sexuality and spirituality is necessary for all to connect with the Divine, but I suspect that Murdock (1990) is correct in suggesting that not only do women connect with the Divine through their bodies, but that repressing and denying the body and its sexual energy limits a woman's access to the Divine (p. 24). The trick though is to have a more symbolic relationship with sexuality and the Divine instead of looking only to the literal experience of sex to result in a more permanent feeling of wholeness. I suspect that the separation of the mind and body as well as the focus on sexual experiences literally is preventing the kind of wholeness that many are seeking.

As part of my re-exploration of Christianity, I began listening to an App that narrates and offers commentary on the Bible from beginning to end within one year. I became open to understanding Jesus and Christ so it made sense that He would show up in some images. The first was an active imagination dialogue that led me to believe that within the Bible is the blueprint to help Christianity evolve beyond patriarchy. Three months later at the gym as I lay on a bench about to work my abs, I had a vision of Christ and Mary merging into one figure (Appendix I). I was intrigued by this image and felt that it made perfect sense since Mary is considered to be the Mother of God. Here is the

sacred feminine right in front of people, and I wondered why others were not as amazed by this obvious significance of the feminine as I was.

One image and fantasy was particularly active and persistent for over a year, that of a penis, and specifically my desire that Phillip thrust his into my mouth as I knelt (Appendix J). For a long time, I supposed this image had to do with my growing capacity for letting go, being vulnerable, and especially being receptive to a relationship with the Divine. The penis image did not feel like a masculine image; it just felt like it symbolized being receptive to something I had resisted in the past. Perhaps more than a coincidence, a few months later images of babies, fire, creativity, penis, and womb were activated. One particular image brought so many things together: my womb with hot colorful flowing lava, a penetrating penis, and flames of red, orange, yellow, and purple bursting up and out of my womb. All around the image I wrote these words: take in phallus, purple God, womb = vessel, phallus = feminine, fire, volcano, madwoman = crazy, and creative (Appendix K). After I drew this image, which emerged spontaneously when I put color pencil to paper, I was able to bring form to something that had been living in me that I was previously unable to articulate in a useful manner.

I prepared and presented a workshop at a college conference titled *Healing the Collective Wounds that Prevent Deep Connection Between Men and Women*. I could not help but think back to a dream council active imagination exercise that occurred at least two years prior where my ancestors, a couple in their thirties from ancient Greek times, shared that something had been stolen from their family: the love between a man and a woman. There may be meaning in my struggle to identify the geographic location my ancestral couple represented. Their dress was similar to mine in my past life regression,

and the place that I entered when I opened the door now feels to have been the place where my ancestral couple traveled from. For a time, I referred to the place and clothes as *ancient Egyptian*, but I wonder now if it is Greek as I reflect on the pull Santorini, Greece continues to have on me following my visit there with my now ex-husband shortly before the beginning of the end of our marriage.

My reading of Eisler (2011) has resulted in a new perspective. Could it be that the love that was lost between a man and a woman goes beyond my ancestral wound and is also reflected in the possibility that the Greek myths also reflect this severing of love between man and woman? Facilitating this conversation at the college about reconciliation gave me a rush of energy and feeling of joy I had not experienced in a very long time. I became aware that this love wound was part of my personal and ancestral psychic DNA, and the response from the students, albeit a small sample, told me that it was important in a collective sense as well. Jungian analyst Murray Stein (1983) suggests that midlife may include a retrograde movement that entails moving backward in order to reconnect with personal and archetypal wounds, which then leads to the separation or death of parts of ourselves, then a period of floating, and eventual reintegration that leads to a more evolved relationship with our unconscious (p. 42). The image of my womb on fire feels like all three phases happening at once as a chaotic mixture of something being disintegrated and created at the same time within a womb filled with warm lava. I suspect it was not a coincidence that this fiery explosion of creative energy emerged during an onslaught of menopausal daily hot flashes and consciously embracing my inner madwoman, one of her tasks being to know when and how to end the relationship with Phillip when it ran its course.

The relationship with Phillip began as an invitation I could not resist accepting and ended during the course of two weeks when the anxiety over certain events brought to light the realization that it had served its purpose and a new boundary needed to be set between this man and me. Interestingly, except for the temporary mother complex that emerged that caused an obsessive worrying about this man, the fresh break felt right. David Deida (2002/2005), author of *God Through Sex*, describes a defining moment of being ready to move on, where there is no place to go but deeper and with more awareness (p. 78). It is as if I got a passing grade for a class, and now I perhaps am ready to move beyond the literal into deeper consciousness, and I wonder what curriculum will be presented and through whom.

Woman's Body

Jungian analyst, Irene de Castillejo (1973/1997) suggests that the Self is the bridge to the Divine, which I take to mean that relationship with the Self is needed in order to be in relationship with God. If our bodies are also a link between God and us, this seems to imply that relationship with our bodies is also needed in order to be in relationship with God (p. 136). Neither statement makes clear what the relationship is between the psyche and the body. Can one come into relationship with the Divine solely through the intellect or solely through the body? If it is true that to achieve wholeness, opposites must be reconciled, especially those of feminine and masculine, then coming into relationship with the body and intellect seem necessary in order to experience the Divine fully. Tallman (2005) suggests that of the four archetypes of spiritual direction, the Lover archetype is the foundation of the spiritual experience and that the Divine is often experienced through sexual intimacy with a partner (p. 70). My growing capacity to

experience love without projecting the need for love onto another contributes to a growing capacity to experience this sense of union with life in general (p. 151). I now understand how one can be brought to or achieve orgasm through pure consciousness (Deida, 2002/2005, p. 34). I believe my surrender and receptivity led to the kind of consciousness I had never experienced before, this consciousness manifesting as bodily arousal, which brought me into contact with the Divine. I could think of no other phrase for this experience except *spiritual orgasm*, which implies a union between the Divine and sexuality. Michael Mirdad (2007), recognized by many as a world-renowned spiritual teacher, author, and healer, in his book *Sacred Sexuality: A Manual for Living Bliss*, describes a spiritual orgasm as “a spiritual and physiological process that first takes place within the skull of your head and then fills your body” (p. 148). He even goes on to describe in detail my embodied experience of the image of light that emanated from my head (Appendix C).

Erel Shalit, Jungian analyst and author of *The Complex: Path of Transformation From Archetype to Ego* (2002), suggests that complexes are rooted in the body and body image (p. 98). I have been conscious of an obsession with my body for a long time. I have a memory of limiting my diet as a teenager to granola bars and Tab soda, over-tanning, and hanging up magazine photos of Brooke Shields all over my walls. My interest in being an artist took form as pencil drawings of models in advertisements. For some reason, I held on to these drawings. Perhaps my mother’s offer to pay for modeling lessons was meant to boost my self-esteem. Learning how to take care of my skin, how to walk through a room, and walking down some runways did contribute to skills that I would need as an effective professional. In the end I was too insecure to be a model,

although now I have this fantasy of being a midlife model. After a lifetime of being held to impossible standards imposed first by my mother then continued by me, I went out into the world with a desire to build an independent life, along with a lot of unexpressed desire. Having been set free, I had no framework or container for managing what needed to be released out of my unconscious.

It was as if I lived two parallel lives, one was conscious and manifested as the responsible and independent woman and the other was a bit unconscious and manifested as a repressed sexually loose woman who was desperate to connect with someone. I was aware of feeling overwhelmed by my desires. I have a complicated relationship with my body. Instead of embracing my body and sexuality, I ended up trying to control it and use it as some kind of currency for connection. By the time I met my now ex-husband, I was exhausted by my failed attempts to connect, and even though I expressed to people that I hated men, there was something about this man's persistence that kept me engaged. I have come to understand the partial purpose of my relationship with my ex-husband to be a respite from the chaos of my sexuality. The relationship with my now ex-husband on the surface seemed to be a safe place for me to express my sexuality, although it also protected me from deep connection with myself and with him. I existed comfortably in this life for many years. I was able to remain disconnected from deep relationship with my Self or my husband. I was able to hide in my masculine intellect, feminist activism, and entrepreneurial mindset. Everything was fine until we became parents. Well, maybe not so fine. Perhaps my ex-husband also found refuge in our relationship. Or perhaps we both were going as deeply as we could.

The benefit of getting a respite from all of the overwhelming feelings related to my sexuality is that I could feel safe and grounded for while. The disadvantage is that I was living life only on a surface level, which was enough until it was not enough anymore. I could hide in my masculine, in my intellect, that is, until I reflected on my desire to start a family. There is something about making the decision to start a family. What came to consciousness was the desire to do it better. At the time I did not understand that my mother wanted to do it better too. My journey to reconnect with the feminine started with the body and sexuality, which allowed me to connect with the Divine. The journey seemed to pause in order for my masculine to bring form to important insights related to my personal life and more importantly to share them with others in this form. In the next chapter I explore the role that film has played in my psychological development, both consciously and unconsciously. More importantly, insights gained through analysis of images in recent mainstream blockbuster movies may reflect something new emerging from the collective unconscious having to do with reconciliation of the feminine and masculine, matter and spirit. I talk more about this in Chapter 8.

Summary

In this chapter I explored my experience of reconnecting with the feminine, which occurred through my body, sexuality, and in relationship with a younger man. As I embraced my conscious awkwardness, I strengthened my capacity to experience vulnerability. This vulnerability seemed to be required in order to surrender to the experience of fully receiving spiritually and then sexually. None of these actions were passive – rather they seemed to require a conscious choice to begin what felt like a

dangerous journey psychologically and emotionally. My reconnection with the feminine manifested through parallel journeys involving spirituality and sexuality. The arousal and orgasm I experienced in spiritual solitude occurred alongside and equaled the arousal and orgasm I experienced with Phillip during affection that did not include penetration. It became difficult to separate the spiritual from the sexual when it came to connecting with what felt like a transpersonal presence.

There seems to have been many partnerships between the feminine and masculine during this personal journey. My reading of de Castillejo (1973/1997) and Bolen (1995/2004) led me to think about love as the Christian Holy Spirit in that both seem to act as an invitation to do some kind of work in order to reconcile opposites, the result of which could be called wisdom. I also considered that the union of love as feminine and spirit as masculine result in wisdom or the new insight that reflects the creation of new consciousness. I wonder if wisdom, which has been personified as feminine, is the feminine part of the masculine spirit. Finally, I wonder whether there is a feminine and masculine within the feminine and masculine, and the role of the ego is to manage all of this tension. For example, does the feminine part of the feminine have to do with being able to receive and surrender and the masculine part of the feminine have to do with seeking consciousness. In this case, it is the feminine, which is seeking consciousness. Likewise, could it be that the feminine part of the masculine is the new insight or wisdom and the masculine part of the masculine the intellect that is needed to articulate the wisdom? The ego's role in this case seems to be about managing the tension between these forces. It just does not seem clear to me when I consider my lived experience, but

perhaps the fact that I cannot clearly distinguish means my experience reflects the beginning of reconciliation between the feminine and masculine.

In the next chapter, I explore how my experience of film has paralleled my growing capacity to consider my lived experience as one way the archetypes of sexuality and spirituality, and feminine and masculine, are seeking expression for the purpose of creating new consciousness.

Chapter 8

Film—Personal and Collective

In this chapter I explore how film images have impacted and reflected my psychological development both unconsciously and consciously. Depth psychology offers me a framework to articulate the impact certain films had on me during the first part of my life (in hindsight). More exciting is having this framework to find meaning in what felt like an obsession with certain films once my conscious individuation journey began. Following a period of gaining personal insights, film after film seemed to come at me that led to insights that I believe go beyond my personal lived experience. At times my spontaneous insights caused me to feel like I was a little crazy, or at least feeling like I was the only one having the experience I was having. Reflections about films seemed to follow a curriculum that started with personal complexes and graduated to being receptive to archetypal energies, which might be seeking expression through my lived experience. Bringing light to and sharing these insights may lead to a collective awareness about something new that is emerging in the form of reconciliation between men and women, the feminine and masculine, body and spirit, and sex and God.

The last part of this chapter suggests that one specific film may be a template for specifically women's experience of sexuality as related to spirituality, but that women today may be experiencing this connection between sexuality and spirituality in a deeper and more intense manner since the time of the book and subsequent film to which I refer.

Film Images Before Midlife

During the first part of my life, I was somewhat conscious of why I was drawn to certain films and types of films. However, without a framework for finding deeper

meaning about the purpose of my connection to these films, I was unable to find the deeper insights that could have been helpful as I attempted to grow and develop psychologically, spiritually, and professionally. Looking back, it is clear that the film *Alien* (Carroll, Giler, & Hill, 1979) was the first to have had a noticeable and dramatic impact on me. It was the first science fiction film that featured a female as the hero who battled the evil aliens as violently as any male could. I found myself rooting for her as she kicked alien ass. On the surface, I believe I was excited at the prospect that the film was proving that women could be like men, which maybe was a reflection of my own over-valuation of the masculine.

At the time I do not think I could have articulated what masculine and feminine looked like, and I likely equated physical strength and the propensity for violence as masculine, not acknowledging that the feminine has its own form and expression of both of those traits. On the other hand, what stood out to me in the sequel *Aliens* (Hurd, G. A., 1986), was the addition of the character Newt, a little girl that was the sole survivor at the scene of alien destruction. The scene in which the film takes place is very dark, there is no plant life, and the little girl, dirty, clothes torn, and unable to speak, is found hiding in a small space. She survived by learning to avoid the alien as she scurried around foraging for food. Today, I can see her as a paradoxical image of the feminine that was forgotten and barely surviving and as an emerging and fragile feminine that is recognized, valued and saved from death. I found the addition of this character to be a meaningful attempt at balancing all the violence with a sense of relationship and valuing of life. I consciously saw the hero Ripley, played by Sigourney Weaver, as expressing the need to value relationship and life at any cost. This was shown by her ordering the crew to leave the

planet if she did not return at a certain time. At the time I probably equated relationship with women as opposed to a feminine trait that potentially exists in everyone. This movie brings to life Murdock's (1990) notion that the Heroine's journey is about returning to relationship at the end of the journey. Along the way, the Heroine does battle, but the purpose of the battle is to return to relationship.

Reflecting now, I believe these films were attempts to process the changing notions of feminine and masculine both within me and within the collective. In fact, the sequels offered an interesting twist in the story line, starting with discovering that the alien is a queen mother busy laying hundreds of eggs in an area of the abandoned site. Human beings happen to be useful as temporary hosts for what emerges from the hatched eggs. The human hosts die once the now fully formed baby alien bursts from its chest. In a striking scene, Sigourney Weaver's character, Ripley, rescues Newt before she becomes a host and the scene of Newt on her hip as Ripley uses a flamethrower to set fire to hundreds of eggs is striking. It is like a giant womb on fire. She has now made an enemy of the queen mother alien. Eventually Ripley falls victim and becomes a host, ultimately sacrificing herself to prevent the alien from being born. The Christ archetype comes to mind as Ripley voluntarily sacrifices herself, falling backwards in slow motion into an inferno as she holds back the alien attempting to burst out of her chest.

One could easily see part of the story line to be about humanity's arrogance as the covert purpose of this mission is to harness the seeming indestructible nature of the alien for military purposes. But this is an obvious message. In another scene, the queen mother alien does not kill Ripley because she is carrying the yet to be born baby alien. The story line feels very complex for me, symbolizing something emerging from a dark place that

seemed monstrous. The queen mother alien seemed to be some kind of mirror as it seemed only motivated by protecting its capacity to create. It is as if one part of the feminine has waged battle on another part of the feminine, the one-sided masculine interested only in harnessing what it finds useful in order to fuel its capacity to perpetuate its dominance. During my reflections on film, I found that I seem to be particularly drawn in by those created by English filmmaker Ridley Scott, and *Alien* (Carroll, Giler, & Hill, 1979) was considered his commercial breakthrough.

I continued to be drawn to science fiction films with an eye on the growing acceptance of women playing the roles that had been reserved for men. I watched for this emerging acceptance of women as masculine with a little bit of feminine in the many TV series that were spun off the original science fiction television series *Star Trek* (Roddenberry, 1966). I was excited about the first woman captain to appear in *Star Trek: Voyager* (Berman, 1995). I was consciously curious about whether they would allow her character to be relationship oriented, which would contrast the style of Captain Picard from the previous series *Star Trek: Next Generation* (Roddenberry, 1987). Maintaining emotional neutrality was an overt part of the story line and his leadership style, and interestingly, there were a few episodes that dealt with the cost of this approach to him personally and to his crew. Books had even been written about his leadership style. It was noteworthy for me that during the first episode of *Star Trek: Voyager* (Berman, 1995) Captain Janeway put her hand on a colleague's shoulder. I was excited at the thought that her leadership style would be different but just as effective as Captain Picard's (Roddenberry, 1987), although at the time my thinking was limited by tying the feminine value of relationship to woman and the capacity to be emotionally neutral to man. Today

I would question defining the capacity to be properly emotionally neutral as masculine.

As Murdock (1990) suggests, the feminine Heroine's journey includes patient cunning and strategic action.

There was another film that had a significant impact on me, because it also had to do with the working out of the feminine and masculine, as well as spoke to my complexes around overcoming my own limiting beliefs. In *Working Girl* (Nichols, 1988), two women are pitted against each other, reflecting reality as the women who proved they were man enough to get into male dominated fields not only had to leave behind the feminine, they had to leave behind other women for fear of being seen as too caring.

Katherine Parker, played by Sigourney Weaver, plays the woman who made it, and Tess McGill the secretary, played by Melanie Griffith, is the working-class girl who has the smarts to get to the top, but she is the victim of projection and undermined by Katherine. This movie reflected for me the inner turmoil of women during this time that played out as aggression towards other women, a reflection of the entrenched need for hierarchy and ranking that is the mark of the dominator model of social organization that we call patriarchy. An interesting part of the story is that Tess falls for a businessman, played by Harrison Ford, who also happens to be the love interest of Katherine. Katherine seems to represent the one-sided masculine, as expressed in women, with her desire to win at any cost that ends up sending Harrison Ford's character into the arms of Tess, who seems to reflect a softer version of effective professional woman. In this particular film, Harrison Ford does seem to play the role of animus for Tess. She has already put her scheme in place to expose Katherine for stealing her idea, but her relationship with Harrison Ford's character seems to give her the final boost of confidence she needs to get to the finish

line. Harrison Ford's character felt promising for me because he both respected Tess's presence in the business world, and at the same time he could be in intimate relationship with her.

At the time I appreciated this film more as the underdog story I tended to gravitate toward. I also saw it as a film that pitted women against each other. This real-life aggression not only resulted in division between working women and women who chose to stay home and parent, but it also existed between working women. Professional women had entered a new kind of class system where women who achieved higher status looked down on women who were left behind or enjoyed working as secretaries. I observed this dynamic as a budding professional in the 1980s.

I suspect I was not the only woman for whom the film *Thelma and Louise* (Scott & Gitlin, 1991) brought to consciousness a rage that had been brewing in the collective unconscious of women. Two women friends decide to take a spontaneous trip. The cynical and independent Louise, played by Susan Sarandon, is just what Thelma, played by Geena Davis, needed to break free from the grips of her emotionally abusive husband. A harmless expression of rebelliousness turns serious when Louise finds herself in a no-win situation and kills a man who attempts to rape Thelma after having a little fun at a bar. They now find themselves wanted and on the run, and as they come to terms with the reality that they are not likely to be believed that their actions were in self-defense, they take a stand for self-determination. Along the way, the two women become empowered. The image of the blown-up semi-truck and the driver who fled when he saw the look in the two women's eyes I believe reflected an unconscious need to release this rage into consciousness. The detective, played by Harvey Keitel, is the one man in the film that

sympathizes with the women and believes them. *Thelma and Louise* in the end do not trust the system and are pushed to the brink as they drive off a cliff to their death. I do not think I was alone as I cheered for the women to choose death over oppression. This eruption of anger on the screen coincided with the launching of the independent cable network *Lifetime*, which targeted women. For an entire decade, women's consciousness was raised as the network brought to TV story after story of real violence against women. One of those stories, *A Cry For Help: The Tracey Thurman Story* (Markowitz, 1989) spared no graphic detail as it told the story of a woman who sought to escape her abusive husband. One scene depicted police officers and neighbors in a circle watching as the woman's husband beat her and stomped on her head, resulting in injuries so bad she had permanent paralysis in parts of her body. No one came to her rescue. At this time, violence within a marriage was considered a domestic and private affair. The real story on which the movie was based involved a civil lawsuit against the City of Torrington, Connecticut, and its ruling sparked nationwide reform of domestic violence laws. The lawsuit sought to elevate the status of woman to that of citizen who had a civil right to be protected by law enforcement. The images of unleashed rage in *Thelma and Louise* (Scott & Gitlin, 1991) perhaps also fueled the eventual criminalization of marital rape in all 50 states by 1993.

Reflection of just a sampling of personal reactions to films brought to life what I think was percolating in the unconscious of individual women. These films coincided with an eruption of consciousness that led to significant policy changes that impacted the daily lives of women. Considering all of this today makes it clear, however, that even as incremental progress is made towards valuing women and the feminine, unexpressed

anger and rage remain. Could it be possible that this unexpressed rage, whether conscious or unconscious also ends up contributing to the backlash against progress and stands in the way of true relationship between women and men? I feel the answer is yes. If what is required for relationship with the Self, which can be seen as our bridge to experiencing the Divine, is a union of the feminine and masculine, then conscious attention to healing this wound within in order to take back projections onto others is important. Further, if it is true that the feminine manifests as our connection to our bodies and sexuality, then sexuality is part of this reconciliation between the feminine and the masculine. Violence against women seems to almost always be expressed through sexual assault and rape. This issue is very complex, and Eisler (1995) outlines a gradual process by which the natural human desire for pleasure morphed into valuing pleasure as sinful and pain as sacralized (p. 2). This cultural historian and systems scientist presents new theories and evidence that the evolution of our “highly developed human capacities for sexual pleasure and for intense pleasures of love was a potential turning point in the extraordinary history of this planet” (p. 3). It is difficult to concisely capture all that she presents in her 400-page compelling and hopeful book, but she seems to offer an explanation for the connection between sex and violence against especially women, but also against men who are seen as ranked lower within their own gender.

Nowhere is the equation of sexuality with male brutality and domination as evident as in the ancient Athenians’ numerous mythical and artistic accounts and depictions of rape. Rape is the ultimate translation of phallicism into action. Rape is committed not for pleasure or procreation but in order to enact the principle of domination by means of sex. (p. 108)

Film Images During Midlife

At a certain point in my life, I became sensitive to film images, and I recall being more excited to talk about certain films than others. Perhaps because I developed a specifically feminist lens, films were always just more than entertainment for me, and I sought to discover what meaning might exist beyond the obvious. I seemed to require a deeper experience than most. Learning about Jungian film theory felt like a gift that validated my intuition that some films had more meaning than what the filmmaker intended. I immediately resonated with Jungian analyst Luke Hockley's (Hauke & Hockley, 2011) concept of the third image as the space where this deeper meaning emerges. Gaining this lens has felt like a doorway to a realm where insights both personal and collective are just waiting to be found.

Submission, Phallus, Creativity

Is it possible that one's psychological type contributes to the capacity to access this realm? Perhaps it is because I am an introverted intuitive and feeling type that film has such a pull on me, but I did not realize the extent to which I connected with image so strongly until I felt like I was coming out when I admitted to my depth psychology class that I wanted to write about what I called the *Fifty Shades of Grey* (James, 2012) phenomenon. My conscious reason for writing about the topic was my curiosity about the extreme range of responses to the book and the first movie. I did not come to recognize the deeper meaning of my interest in the film until months after I analyzed in a paper the film's story, its unexpected success, and the strong criticism it elicited. I experienced the film as a beautiful psychological journey between two people who answered the call to embark on the heroine's journey as defined by Murdock (1990) as the feminine journey

towards relatedness. At the time I assumed another pull towards the story had to do with my getting back out into the dating world post-divorce and that my new obsession with feeling submissive had to do with my exhaustion at feeling like I had to be the emotional rock in my family for so many years. I was conscious of my desire to have permission to *fall apart*—just a little bit.

As I became more conscious of my need to relinquish the vision I carried when it came to how the unraveling of my marriage would manifest, the preoccupation with submissiveness subsided for a time. It would re-emerge from my unconscious as a spontaneous fantasy of my desire for Phillip to thrust his penis in my mouth. When I drew the image, I wrote the word *receptive* at the top of the page. Earlier I spoke of this image being related to my growing capacity to surrender and be receptive both sexually and spiritually, but I think the image, which returned again after the end of my relationship with Phillip, also is related to my stubborn attachment to feeling responsible for helping other people grow. I held visions of my now ex-husband and me embracing the challenges and reinventing our marriage. I held visions of how my relationship with Phillip would somehow transform him like it did me. I was able to find meaning in events when they do not go the way I planned, but I remained attached to feeling responsible for ensuring the best possible outcome occurred. The latest version of this returning image, which attached itself to a new man, included my being asked to look into his eyes while I perform oral sex. The re-emergence of this image coincided with events in my life that dramatically tested my capacity to practice nonresistance to the odd circumstances of my ongoing midlife experience. The image of phallus also began to show up in dreams and

images by itself, meaning not attached to a man (Appendix L). For example, in one dream:

I was in bed with a man, but I could not see or feel anything except for his penis, which wanted to enter me. I was aware that there was no condom, which felt risky and liberating at the same time. I found myself resisting, and as the tension between resistance and desire continued, my arousal deepened, and in my dream I experienced a vaginal orgasm for the first time.

In my journal entry about the dream, I wondered about the awareness that there was no condom. In my waking life I was conscious of the frustration of wanting to experience sex without a condom but remained fearful of the possibility of pregnancy, which was unlikely because of my IUD. I was also in the throes of menopause so I am anticipating the freedom I will feel when I no longer fear an unplanned pregnancy. The fact that the phallus was not connected to a man was of particular interest and reminded me of the image of the phallus entering my uterus that was on fire, the feminine label I gave to the phallus, and the feeling of creativity that felt unleashed from me. Perhaps this eruption could be seen as a transcendent third, a new attitude about how the masculine and feminine partner to unleash creativity from an individual.

A couple months later I began to become aware of a connection between how my relationship with the Divine is intertwined with my relationship with or preoccupation with certain men. Further, in addition to finding religious symbolism and meaning in film, more and more popular songs began to be experienced by me as having to do with relationship with the Divine. For example, even though Scott Stapp, the lead singer of American rock band Creed, explained that he was inspired to write *With Arms Wide Open*

(Stapp & Tremonti, 2000) after learning he was going to become a father, I experienced the song as what it might feel like to find God.

From Personal Complexes to Archetypal Expressions

It is striking what one film like *Fifty Shades of Grey* (Taylor-Johnson, 2015) can put in motion when one is open to accessing the realm of the unconscious through film and other popular cultural images. As I reflect on the order of the films that have impacted me most during my midlife journey, I cannot help but think about C. G. Jung's theory of synchronicity. Not long after writing my paper about the book *Fifty Shades of Grey* (James, 2012) and the accompanying film, *Into the Woods* (Marshall, DeLuca, Platt, & McDougall, 2014) unleashed more new insights from my unconscious. In the film, which brings together five separate fairy tales, all of the characters at some point find themselves in the woods where they work out complexes and transform in some way. I felt as though the stories were written for me personally as one by one came to life as the characters in my psyche and personal life. One of the tales—*The Baker's Wife*—for me was a story about how parental complexes play out within a marriage relationship. The baker's wife, played by Emily Blunt, comes across as not only the source of strength in the relationship but the carrier of the courage needed to explore the shadow. She ends up in the woods unable to resist the seduction of Cinderella's prince. She effectively holds the tension between the morality of her choice and commitment to meeting a deeper need. In *Aspects of the Masculine; Aspects of the Feminine* (Jung, 1996/1989, 1982), Jung describes this dilemma as being caught between the forces of "historical inertia and the divine urge to create" (p. 72). The baker's wife is caught between being judged for going against social convention and the force of becoming more complete. After her

accidental death, it is her spirit that gives her husband the confidence to accept his role as father for their son. This particular story helped me make sense of what I perceived to be the unconscious suffering of my now ex-husband and the role I played in our marriage.

I believe my experience of the film *Room In Rome* (Medem & Longoria, 2010) was the beginning of my understanding that reconnecting with the feminine was a Divine revelation and had to do with the body and sexuality. In this film, two women come together, one lesbian and one heterosexual, and they answer a call to the heroine's journey towards relatedness. In the end they realize the experience does not have to do with some illusion of their ending up together, but that their intimate experience has helped them come into deeper relationship with themselves as individuals, which in turn will impact their capacity to be in relationship with another. The religious symbolism in the form of paintings on the walls and ceilings surround their sexual connection as they confess and reveal their darkest secrets and vulnerable dreams. This movie brings to life the feminine and Goddess energy, which celebrates relatedness, and the connection between sexuality and the Divine.

Creating space for safely exploring, being receptive to, and being vulnerable has been an important part of my midlife journey, and I now see that the limited access I had to Phillip for 22 months was a blessing as I explored and grew my capacity to receive and be vulnerable spiritually. If it is true that many individual women or even women collectively carry unexpressed anger and rage from old wounds, a defensive shell likely interferes with the capacity to connect with the feminine within and form a deep connection with a partner. *Room in Rome* (Medem & Longoria, 2010) might not have been able to effectively achieve what this feels like for me had it been between a man and

a woman at this time. If the same liaison had been between a man and woman, perhaps sexuality and romance might have overshadowed the spiritual and psychological components.

During this time, the much-anticipated blockbuster superhero film *Wonder Woman* (Roven, Snyder, Snyder & Suckle, 2017) came out. For me she represented an active love that had the power to defeat evil in the form of her brother Ares, the God of War, although by the end of the film I came to understand, as she did, that evil cannot really be defeated. I started telling people if I had a super power it would be love, and my daily task became to learn how to *be love* and to be a force for love in the world. I was not sure exactly what I meant except that love was not confined to romantic love. Instead, for me love had to do with helping people feel safe to experience deeper connection with other human beings despite their flaws.

My journey suddenly took a turn, and more movies prompted intense reactions related to my spiritual journey. The first of these films was *Black Panther* (Feige, 2018). The film for me symbolized attempts at reconciliation between opposing forces within the individual, the larger culture, and the world. The story line could be experienced as a straightforward superhero film for some, but I continue to find more complexity in the film, and I suspect that part of the reason it became the highest-grossing superhero movie of all time in the United States is that it brought to the surface the exhaustion of division, which seems to be fueled by unacknowledged trauma at the cultural level. T'Challa, played by Chadwick Bosemen, is the son of the king of Wakanda, an African nation that hides its prosperity from the rest of the world. When the king dies, T'Challa seems to be the obvious heir to the throne, and he is granted the power of the Black Panther through

the drinking of a heart-shaped herb. Unexpectedly, he is challenged by Killmonger, the son of T'Challa's uncle who was killed by T'Challa's father for betraying Wakanda as a secret agent stationed in Los Angeles. The Uncle's son, traumatized and left without a father, returns to fight T'Challa for the throne, intending to use Wakanda's hidden technology to wage war on the *oppressors*. The film seems to attempt to present the complexity of division within the African American community, as well as other populations that suffer from the generational wounds of colonialism. The only white character is CIA agent Everett K. Ross, played by Martin Freeman, who is affectionately referred to by T'Challa's sister as the *colonialist*. The symbolism of the black panther in the film I believe has to do with union, and it speaks to the unifying of opposites happening for me personally as well the desire for some kind of unification within the collective. It is significant that all of the actors were people of color except one white man, and there were both strong female characters and relationship-oriented male characters. In the final scene King T'Challa addresses the United Nations with a message about peace, and it becomes clear that the resources of Wakanda are key to achieving peace. Wakanda's resources symbolize something ancient and sacred that originated in Africa that is key to reconciliation. I believe that there are archetypal energies having to do with reconciliation attempting to find new expression through this film. Somewhere in between the first and sixth time I viewed the film, a black panther showed up in my dream:

I was in bed sleeping on my side and facing the wall with a window. I could feel the presence of a black panther but felt that I could not look at the majestic animal because I felt so small. I was overcome with a feeling of sacredness.

A little time on the internet took me to an interesting blog for the J. Paul Getty Trust, described as the world's largest cultural and philanthropic organization dedicated to the visual arts. This particular blog post (Lipp, 2018) was part of a series *Book of Beasts*, which highlights the animals of the medieval bestiary. From here I found an online article suggesting the main protagonist who becomes the Black Panther superhero can be seen to resemble the Christ archetype. The blog posting outlines the similarities between the symbolism of the panther and Christ, including the panther's role as supreme protector and its capacity to bring harmony and unity to the animal kingdom while also providing protection from evil. The blog article went on to point out that the panther has re-emerged as a "symbol of leadership and unity," showing up in comics, civil rights activism and film. The image of a black panther in the film seems different from other superheroes, who can be seen as personifying the various pathologies or characters within our psyche. Something I find interesting is that the Black Panther character seems to have no underlying wound from which his super power derives. Other superheroes like Iron Man, Thor, and Deadpool definitely reflect an underlying pathology that viewers perhaps are able to connect with, even if unconsciously. Just as identifying one's pathology with the Greek God of War Ares could help one come into relationship with their unacknowledged war-mongering side, identifying with Deadpool or Iron Man could do the same.

With a growing consciousness about my spiritual journey, reading Jungian analyst Robin Robertson's (1994) interpretation of the Bible's *Book of Revelation* through a depth psychological lens was intriguing and inspiring. Once again, I seemed to feel hope that Christianity could evolve beyond patriarchy. It was not long after following my

absorption of this interpretation of a Biblical text whose meaning seems a mystery even to theologian experts, that Robertson's interpretation dramatically came to life during my six viewings of the blockbuster film *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018) over six weeks of my life. The superhero film is based on the DC Comics character Aquaman, who becomes the promise of reconciliation between the seven underwater kingdoms of Atlantis and with the surface world. Young Aquaman, named Arthur by his mother, Queen of Atlantis who fled an arranged marriage, and his father, Tom, a lighthouse keeper, would come to see his existence as the reason for his mother's death when she was forced to return to Atlantis in order to save him. Arthur's wound of separation from his mother and her belief that he would unite the underwater kingdoms with the surface world would become his gift.

One can easily identify a few archetypal experiences playing out through the movie (Wan, 2018), including the hero's journey, and I presume many people may also be conscious about how the portrayal of feminine and masculine in the two main characters is more nuanced. Aquaman is a big burly man and Mera, his counterpart is more stereotypically feminine in this film. They each seem to take turns acting as anima or animus for each other, for example when Mera is the clear thinker and provides direction to Aquaman during moments of vulnerability and self-doubt. My experience of the film was so surprising and so deeply tied to Robertson's (1994) depth psychological interpretation of the *Book of Revelation* that I researched for possible articles that reflected my experience. I found nothing. The realization came during the third viewing of the film and specifically the image of Aquaman, golden trident in hand, riding atop the beast, which rose from the Trench Kingdom, along with the character played by Willem

Dafoe's quiet proclamation that "The King Is Risen." I continue to explore the reasons behind my tears as I listened to those words. I identified with Arthur as a kind of underdog, and his wounds becoming the source of his power inspired me to trust that coming into relationship with my own wounds would bring a new sense of meaning to my life. Two dreams that week perhaps took a cue from this particular scene of the film and eventually prompted some big questions and a little bit of clarity for me. In the first dream:

The chief operations officer of the national nonprofit for which I worked and just left was handing me a crown and offering me a job to run a region in Ohio. I don't get a chance to accept or reject because I wake up, but there is a look of struggle on her face—as if she is trying to reconcile with me, but she can't quite find the right way to do it.

This image was perplexing, because I had absolutely no associations with Ohio and the crown felt to be a false gesture from her, a literal person with whom I had a difficult relationship. During my time with this nonprofit, I was conscious of the tension between this woman and me. Part of me felt dismissed and misunderstood by her, and part of me recognized that she also represented something that I needed to learn about myself. When I drew the crown image in the colors of fuchsia and gold with gems, I wrote the words condescending and humility and I came to consider my own need for humility.

Four days later I had this dream:

I was coming up the steps from the basement in my childhood home, a fearful image that has shown itself in many dreams. I was halfway up the steps and then my sister closed the door and turned off the lights. I tried to yell, "How could you do that?" but the words would not come out.

As children, my sisters and I felt fear going into the basement, until as a teenager I cleaned it up and claimed it as my private space in which to listen to music and escape my family. In my dreams though, the basement is always a scary place, particularly the closet in the back room. In an earlier dream:

An alien in the form of water took me down to the basement, to that closet, where I peered into a hole in the floor that contained fire. I could not face it and ran up the steps.

For this recent dream I decided to draw it to see what would happen. In my drawing I went back to that closet and opened up the doors. I saw the hole in the floor and it was just black and red. I wrote the words *secret*, and then *power* below that, and then *fear of* on the very top (Appendix M). When I drew the image, the energy shifted inside me from negative to a more positive sense of power. I wondered what is this secret power that lives in my shadow, and then I thought back to a post I wrote for my own blog the night before about *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018) and midlife, sharing how powerful the image of Aquaman riding atop the beast with the golden trident and Willem Dafoe's declaration, "The King Is Risen." In the film the old King banished himself to the Hidden World to guard the trident, and when Aquaman presented himself as the pure king with pure motive, the trident transferred from the old king to Aquaman, the new king. Aquaman's wound, what he thought made him unworthy, was exactly what turned him into a king with pure motive. I came to see the meaning of my relationship with this image and those in these two dreams as assurance that something new was brewing inside me that was looking for a way out.

A significant similarity between the Biblical *Book of Revelation* and *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018) has to do with the seven fallen kingdoms in the film and the seven churches in the Biblical story. In the film Atlantis was once an advanced kingdom using technology that had never been replicated, but its king's unquenchable thirst for more power brought about the falling of the kingdom into the sea, fragmenting the people into seven distinct nations, each evolving or maybe devolving into separate-looking and acting races. The Kingdoms include those of the Fisherman intellectuals and philosophers, the Brine, which devolved, or maybe regressed, into more animalistic form, and the Deserters, whose land dried up when the Sahara turned into a desert. The Trench were one of the original Atlantean Kingdoms that could be seen to represent a regression towards pure insatiable primal instincts and guarded by the Beast who was said to be the oldest of the Trench. I wondered about the role of the Trench creatures as the guardians of the Hidden Kingdom, the place where the golden trident was hidden after Atlantis crumbled and sank to the bottom of the ocean due to its hubris. It became clear to me that when the old King and Kingdom were destroyed, it would be necessary to bring light to the shadow in order to find the treasure, the golden trident that would tame the beast or the instincts. One of the most powerful scenes was Aquaman and his female counterpart Mera, perhaps representing the feminine and masculine partners, willingly diving into the water with nothing but flares as they swam to the deepest part of the ocean, surrounded by Trench creatures who wanted to devour them but were held off by the light of flare guns. I found it interesting that both Aquaman and Mera descended into the Trench, bringing light to the dark, consciousness to the powerful archetypal primal instincts. They both must then go through a portal not knowing if they will survive. Once through the

portal, they arrive at the Hidden Sea, a time of prehistoric creatures seemingly living peacefully. The golden trident is now in the Lost World, it is the only thing that will unite the fragmented Kingdoms of Atlantis, and the Trident is guarded by the Trench Beast.

Later, when Aquaman emerged from the depths atop the beast, only after he confronted the beast that guarded the trident, I whispered aloud, “This is the *Book of Revelation*,” because the image of the beast seemed to resemble the description of the beast in the Biblical story. Only a true king can get the trident, a king of pure motive. Overcoming the Beast required humility rather than strength, as shown in the scene of Aquaman on his knees in total surrender, responding to the Beast’s question about deserving the trident with “I am not worthy. I am here because I love my family.” The beast could be seen to represent Satan, manifesting as shame, guilt, doubt about one’s worthiness. Faced with death and knowing that only a pure king, one of pure motive, would be able to access the trident, Aquaman again refers to himself as a *bastard son, a mongrel, a half-breed*. This makes me think about Jesus, born of a woman pure in spirit married to a carpenter man in a muddy manger. Jesus was born as a result of God’s love. Aquaman was born of the love between two people from different worlds. Atlantis was once part of the surface world, but its greed was the cause of its demise; its sinking to the bottom of the ocean and a once unified people became separated and divided and unable to communicate with each other.

A significant part of Robertson’s (1994) interpretation of the *Book of Revelation* has to do with reconciliation between many types of opposites, and ultimately between the feminine and masculine. Arthur was born to Tom Curry, a lighthouse keeper, and Atlannis, Queen of Atlantis. Arthur’s father is a humble land dweller who finds Atlannis

on shore; she escaped an arranged marriage. The product of their love is Arthur, who is seen as the potential for reconciliation between the sea and the land. Arthur's wound is a feminine wound because his mother must leave him, but he maintains a sense of relatedness with his father. His mother is a warrior and his father cares for a lighthouse. She sees him as being able to facilitate the healing between the sea and the land because he is a product of both. Without his mother, Arthur relies mostly on his wounded masculine, which manifests as aggression. Eventually, he has no choice but to go to the depths after his half-brother Orm, Aquaman's half-brother, attacks the surface. He now must explore the other part of who he is but has denied, the sea, his unconscious, and the place of his wounded feminine. It is Mera, pledged as wife to Orm, who partners with him, guiding him on the journey with both her masculine and feminine. I would suggest that Arthur goes on two separate journeys. The first journey is facing the beast in the Trench where he faces his shadow, but instead of killing the beast he kneels in humility. After coming into relationship with his wounded child, he is ready for the physical battle, his motive being reconciliation between land and sea.

The main women characters in *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018), Queen Atlanna and Princess Mera, both play the role of disrupter, brave challengers of convention striving towards the highest principle of love. The Queen is punished for her rebellion, sacrificed to the Trench and assumed dead, but she survives and is redeemed; she is the wise woman who stands for unification and love. As she watches her second-born son Orm being taken away, she tells him "Your father misled you. The sea and the land are one." Mera finds herself faced with the same challenge between her allegiance to both her father and kingdom and helping Aquaman prevent a war between the surface and the sea.

It is these two women who prepare Aquaman to face the Beast and secure the trident.

Both women embody a balance of the feminine and masculine, a kind of paradox. They are able to focus on justice and be merciful, to judge the situation by facts and call on an inner knowing as well.

Reconciling the masculine and feminine means many things, because the feminine also refers to nature, the body, and sexuality, all things that have been denigrated by patriarchal systems and religions. One image in particular caused me to eagerly search for something in Jung's writings that I had perhaps tucked away until I would need it. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1963/1989), Jung describes when his work led him to consider the connection between psychology and religion and their connection to alchemy, which he described as "a form of religious philosophy" (p. 209). During this time Jung received a spontaneous image of Christ, "I saw that his body was made of greenish gold" (p. 210). Jung went on to connect this image to the goal of alchemy, which is to reconcile spirit and matter. When Aquaman is transformed as a result of securing the trident, his clothing transforms as well into a combination of intense green and gold, and of course the trident is a brilliant gold. Mera is also dressed in green, with a gold crown on her head. My experience of the two of them felt numinous and reflected for me a Christ figure, which unified the fragmented kingdoms that were once Atlantis with the surface world, reconciling feminine and masculine, and reconciling spirit and nature.

During part of my individuation journey, specifically during my relationship with Phillip, I felt lured by the promise that Christianity might be able to evolve out of patriarchy. With a depth psychology lens, I came to appreciate the depth that exists

between and behind the dogma, and now I do not need anything from Christianity. Further, I do not believe that Christianity will evolve beyond patriarchy in time to save itself. I believe people overall are too hungry for reconciliation and their patience is wearing thin.

The intensity of my reaction to the film *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018) was exceeded by that of my reaction to the blockbuster film that came soon after. The first time I viewed *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Landau, 2019), I knew there was something there but I could not see it. I left feeling unimpressed but knew that I needed to see it again. Subsequent viewings prompted much in the way of archetypal energies, but it was not until the sixth time I viewed the movie that I felt compelled to take notes that ended up filling three paper napkins. I can still feel the intensity of my reaction to one of the last scenes, where Edward Norton, plays the character Nova, and is referred to as the omnipotent and all-seeing power residing in the sky city. The final scene of Nova slowly removing his goggles at last revealing his cold and penetrating eyes and overlooking Iron City prompted an eruption of warrior energy as I actually said aloud in the theater, *Father God is going down!* The energy of this moment was different than the fear that recently had re-emerged from my unconscious. I began to understand that part of the meaning of my relationship with Phillip was to be able to face what I perceived as sexist and oppressive beliefs without feeling like a scab was being ripped off a wound. Rather, the old feeling of fear that someone's beliefs were threatening to me transformed into confidence to claim that my spiritual path is my own and not subject to anyone else's correction or condemnation.

The theme of dismemberment is strong in *Alita* (Cameron & Landau, 2019). The story begins with the finding of a dismembered female cyborg by Dr. Ido, a kind doctor. Surprisingly, the cyborg's human brain is still intact, and Dr. Ido gathers her up, takes her home, and gives her a new body. It is apparent that this becomes personal though as Dr. Ido uses the cyborg to bring his dead daughter to life by giving her the body she was supposed to have before she was murdered, along with her name, Alita. From the beginning, this film is about dismemberment of the body, of the feminine, and perhaps the wounded masculine. The dismemberment seems to be an important part of the process of reunion, perhaps a dismantling of the conventional notions of the feminine and masculine, as well as matter and spirit. Alita now is on a journey to find her real self, which is ultimately as a warrior who declares she will "not stand by in the presence of evil." As Alita comes to feel her warrior energy and begins fighting the bad guys who work for Nova, there is a second dismemberment. But not before Alita's intuition takes her to the wreckage of a supposed enemy ship halfway submerged and made of advanced technology that has been lost for 300 years. Alita finds a missing piece of herself under water, guided only by her intuition and bodily connection to the energy emanating from the suit she sees inside the ship. The cyborg body inside comes to life as Alita comes near and she is energized as she feels she is getting closer to discovering who she is. Fearful of what Alita will do once attached to the most powerful combat technology the world had ever seen, Dr. Ido refuses to make the switch. Feeling deprived of her authentic being as expressed in her body, Alita shows intense rage and goes off to join the ranks of the Hunter-Warriors. She comes face-to-face with Nova's number one murderous puppet and

is once again dis-membered. Dr. Ido has no choice but to return to her the body in which she expresses her full potential.

Dismemberment as metaphor has been present throughout my individuation journey. I recall this dream:

I am in a house. I feel comfortable in the house, but I am not sure it is my house. Suddenly, the floor begins to separate from the wall and a space opens up. Underneath the floor is water and there is danger that the water will flood the house. I panic and start moving things around. I say to someone “We don’t even have any boxes,” to which he or she replies “Just move it onto the sidewalk.”

The day before this dream, when I read a promotion email about a video interview of me, which included the word breakdown, I was triggered. Nowhere in my interview or in conversation did I describe any part of my journey as including breakdown. I became paranoid of what people who knew me would think if they read this. After this dream, I had to admit I was feeling overwhelmed by holding myself together. Thankfully, my dream did not end in disaster—no flooding and apparently, the sidewalk outside was safe. Lopez-Pedraza (2000) recounts the Orphic myth of the birth of Dionysus and his dismemberment:

Dionysus was born from the union of Zeus—lord of Olympus, god of luminosity, image-maker, and joyful and tolerant father—with his daughter Persephone, queen of the underworld, she of the beautiful ankles, personifying the dark forces of the invisible underground realm of the dead. So we can imagine Dionysus as the product of very complex opposites. (p. 14)

Earlier I described one image during my individuation journey of puzzle pieces not quite put together, and in the earliest stages, I had many dreams of being in houses that were not mine, had holes in the floor, and were never quite right. In my dreams I usually had the feeling that I had to find a way to make the house as lovely as possible, as if that house was my only choice of where to live. *Alita* (Cameron & Landau, 2019) though brings the dismemberment of Dionysus to life very dramatically. Perhaps images of violent and literal dismemberment have not visited me because I am conscious of my unraveling and movement towards something unknown. The images of dismemberment in this film I believe reflect the unconscious dismemberment of patriarchal religion and the dominator model of social organization that is emerging from the collective unconscious. The dismantling of these entrenched systems will definitely feel like violent dismemberment to those most resistant to evolving to a system that does not rely on hierarchy and ranking. My own journey confirms that moving from the safety of the wounded masculine requires the courage and humility to develop the capacity to feel vulnerable and to surrender one's notion of any expected outcome.

What is interesting about this movie (Cameron & Landau, 2019) is that there could be a temptation to view Alita as identifying only with her masculine side, which would reflect the mistaken belief that the feminine is not a warrior. There are many compensatory gestures and moments when Alita's feminine shows up in the form of connection and relationship with Hugo, her friend and romantic partner, as well as Dr. Ido. These two men seem to have a beautiful balance of the masculine and feminine, both encouraging Alita's journey to find herself and being deeply connected to her. One scene particularly resonated with me and in a way sums up how I feel today about relating to a

male romantic partner. Alita is in a bar fight and asks Hugo to stand back; he complies because he has seen her in action before. After she destroys quite a few, mostly male, Hunter-Warriors, Hugo takes a turn and prevents someone from taking a swing at her. This female Hunter-Warrior turns and with a girlish and vulnerable look on her face says *thank you*. There are other scenes where Alita becomes easily distracted by a small dog that makes several appearances, but she is always able to go into warrior mode when needed. She is able to call on whichever energy she needs at the moment.

There are two other occurrences of dismemberment in *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Landau, 2019) that occur before that of Dr. Chiron, who used to be married to Dr. Ido, and was the mother of their murdered daughter. These scenes of dismemberment occur in the moment of a new insight or awakening of the feminine principle of relatedness. Hugo, who had become hardened somewhat, begins to stand on higher principles and in the process is fatally stabbed. I see Hugo's aggression resulting from the trauma of a dominator model of social organization. Seeing Alita and Hugo in this moment awakens Dr. Chiron's reconnection with the feminine principle of relatedness. Alita allows Hugo to borrow her heart until he can get a new body from Dr. Ido. Attention now turns to the Sky City and Nova, who has been able to distract everyone through a system of social organization that depends on scarcity, hierarchy and ranking. The film dramatically illustrates how a dominator model of social organization persists, effectively captured in a statement by one of Nova's subordinates, "I'd rather rule in hell than serve in heaven." Hugo becomes compelled to try to get to Sky City, and he is ultimately dismembered and falls to his death. Rather than be overcome with rage

and the need for revenge, Alita puts her masculine to work and patiently works the system, looking forward to the day when she will meet Nova face to face.

Alita (Cameron & Landau, 2019) continued to bring new insights for me when it came to what felt like something new emerging from the collective unconscious when it comes to spirituality. Alita, I believe, illustrates what it means to be in relationship with one's spiritual warrior, one of the archetypes that are explored by Tallman (2005). The author suggests that in order to be an effective and positive spiritual guide, one needs to be able to relate to and express the archetypes of Sovereign, Warrior, Lover, and Seer. Rare individuals are able to call on the appropriate archetypal energies when needed, Jesus being one example. Perhaps the complexity of this balancing act contributes to my feeling that I am receiving a completely different message from the Bible than some others. When I attempted to see where I stood with these spiritual archetypes, I found that I was strong when it came to Lover and Seer, and this made sense given my introverted intuition and love wound, the latter of which I have come into healthier relationship. When it comes to the archetype of Sovereign, part of my recent journey has been about setting boundaries and standing up for myself when it comes to my religious beliefs in a way that I could keep my cool. I have a strong Warrior streak, although after setting aside the past anger, which fueled much of my activism and opinions, I have learned to be more detached as I come into healthier relationship with my wounds.

Within a month after viewing *Alita* (Cameron & Landau, 2019), I experienced another film as descending upon my psyche. My first viewing of the superhero film *Captain Marvel* (Boden & Fleck, 2019) left me feeling emotionally neutral, except for appreciating that this seemed to be the second female superhero, after Alita (Cameron &

Landau, 2019), that was not sexualized. Interestingly, both female superheroes proudly and humbly proclaimed in their respective movies, “I’m just a girl.” As I sought to compensate for my one-sided masculine, I found myself explaining, *I can do the independent, strong things, but I also just want to feel like a girl.* I only had to view the film a second time to begin to allow the images to provoke more unconscious eruptions related to my current spiritual journey. In this film, the battle between the feminine and masculine only secondarily played out between a literal man and woman. Instead, this journey of reunification played out within Carol’s psyche. Not knowing she has been kidnapped from Earth by another planet’s race because she absorbed the energy from a cutting-edge technology, she relies on the guidance of her male mentor who warns her about her tendency to lose control because of her emotions. This tension between head and heart becomes the journey.

In *Captain Marvel* (Boden & Fleck, 2019), her ill-intentioned mentor, played by Jude Law, suggests that the supreme intelligence—God—appears differently, personified as someone one trusts and respects. Like Alita (Cameron & Landau, 2019), Carol does not know who she really is, and during the film she journeys to the Self, finding that her wound contains her gift. This film awakened in me a strong feeling of being manipulated by patriarchal religion. Journaling around this time prompted a realization that for some reason I felt I must have a good reason for rejecting Christianity, and I am not sure who is supposed to get to define that. I laughed as I journaled about my lack of trust of my own intuition that this framework just does not resonate with me, but that I feel the need to do my due diligence before I discard a religious framework that leaves me unfulfilled. I have to admit that perhaps I had something in common with C. G. Jung – a fantasy of saving

Christianity and helping it evolve out of patriarchy. Perhaps this fantasy, along with my fantasy of interfaith understanding with Phillip, is more about the reconciliation with my own feminine and masculine, and sexuality and spirituality.

The most powerful scene for me in *Captain Marvel* (Boden & Fleck, 2019) was Captain Marvel falling to her death after having her power taken away by the supreme intelligence. I experienced this as liberation from the powerful forces of religion to define what one's relationship with God can be. As she fell, it was Carol, not her superhero form of Captain Marvel, that ceased resisting and surrendered, and then came to life, stronger than ever. She found her power in herself, not as given to her by someone else's perception of God. The image of Captain Marvel glowing made me think about an image I drew a few days before my first viewing of the film. During the film I wrote in my notebook, *glowing = menopause*. I had been suffering from lack of sleep partly due to my body not being able to regulate its heat.

In the film *Captain Marvel* (Boden & Fleck, 2019), Carol projects her understanding of the supreme intelligence onto Dr. Larson, who admittedly has been playing both sides of what she calls an unjust war. Dr. Larson was someone who Carol trusted, although for reasons unknown to her at the time. Carol's mentor, played by Jude Law, exploited her God-image. The two lines, "We saved you" and "You're only human," now prompt in me anger about how manipulative religious dogma is. One of my favorite quotes from Ghandi is "God has no religion," and if religion is humanity's best attempt at understanding one's relationship with God, and if humanity is fallible, then that implies that humanity's interpretation is prone to error. Further, if Christians' understanding of their relationship with God evolved from the Old Testament into the

New Testament, then it is reasonable to expect that humanity's understanding of relationship with God will again evolve. Since humanity's understanding of God is limited and fallible, then my personal experience of God may be part of that evolution. Unfortunately, my recent re-exploration of Christianity has only confirmed my original intuition that this particular framework is too limiting for me. I cannot force myself to connect with and feel something I do not. Perhaps my focus on developing my masculine over all these years, and then reconnecting with my feminine, has allowed me to come to this knowing in a balanced way. I seem to have transcended my fear and anger for the most part, and replaced it with a capacity to follow my lived experience to my Self, which is what allows me to experience God.

Archetypal Energies Seeking Expression Through the Individual

In 2010, the film *Eat, Pray, Love* (Pitt, B., Gardner, D., Kleiner, J., Wlodkowski, S., & Noorani, T., 2010) brought to the screen a woman's midlife journey as told in a novel of the same name (Gilbert, 2006). Julia Roberts plays Liz Gilbert, the married woman who uses all her strength to deny the truth that she can no longer stay married. Her guilt is matched by a pull to completely detach from everything that has defined her life. Interestingly, her journey begins after she makes the decision that aligns with her intuitive understanding that she is not complete. A liaison with a younger man provides direction for her individuation journey, which takes her first to Italy, then to India, and finally to Bali. In Italy, Liz comes into healthier relationship with her body and senses as she enjoys Italian culture and cuisine. In India, she comes into healthier relationship with her Self and God as she uncomfortably explores her wounds. In Bali, she grows in her capacity to be vulnerable and surrender as she opens herself up to love with a man.

One could say that the initiation to her journey was experienced through her relationship with the young man played by James Franco, who could be seen as her animus. Their relationship acts as a vessel in which she can feel love and pleasure again. She is also attracted to him because he has a spiritual practice. Seeing a framed photo of his guru prompts her on the path of finding this guru. Perhaps this was the only purpose of the relationship, to provide a short respite and push to begin her journey. Her journey though seems to be disconnected as she alternates between the feminine and masculine in the form of body and mind. In Italy she reconnects with food and her body. At an ashram in India she attempts to quiet her mind through meditation. Bali seems to be a circling back to where she experienced a synchronicity that could be seen to foreshadow her journey and where she ultimately found love. This circling back to love could be seen as the culmination of her heroine's journey to relatedness as Maureen Murdock (1990) described.

Eat, Pray, Love (Pitt, B., Gardner, D., Kleiner, J., Wlodkowski, S., & Noorani, T., 2010) provides one template for modern women's midlife journey. On the other hand, I now find the components of her journey not only too linear and distinct from each other but also surface level. The film did not explore deeply the meaning of her liaison with the younger man, specifically the role of sexuality. Her time in India seemed to feel very intellectual and disembodied. It was only when she got to Bali that spirituality and sexuality seemed to come together but only slightly. Perhaps we are ready to bring to the screen a story that reflects something more intense and deeper happening in the psyches of women.

Summary

If Jung is correct in suggesting that the language of the psyche is the image, then films provide the opportunity to connect with the unconscious on both a personal and collective level. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the field of psychology and the invention of the moving picture emerged in parallel fashion. Could it be that film emerged as an urge from the collective unconscious as a desire to reflect about the toll modern society was taking on the human being? Being introduced to Hockley's (2014) theory of the third image was all I needed to walk through the doorway to finding meaning in film both personally and collectively. Over a five-year period, film after film worked me over against my will, as I felt compelled to see certain films six or seven times, until an insight erupted into consciousness.

In this chapter I explored how certain films contributed to my psychological development before midlife, and then I shared insights I gained once my individuation journey began. After several films helped me make sense of personal complexes, I became open to certain archetypal energies that reached me via the space where the third image emerges. Symbols for dismemberment, patriarchal God, and evolving feminine and masculine, erupted dramatically out of my unconscious. I saw and felt things that made me feel like I was the only one experiencing these images this way. On the other hand, I take to heart Edinger's (2015) suggestion that it is possible my experiences having to do with the reconciliation of sexuality and spirituality are part of a new God-image that may be emerging from the collective unconscious. If this is a possibility, then I feel a responsibility to bring form to these experiences and potentially empower others

to explore film in a way that contributes to the evolution of consciousness on a personal and collective level.

Finally, I looked to *Eat, Pray, Love* (Pitt, B., Gardner, D., Kleniner, J., Wlodekowska, S. & Noorani, T., 2010) as a film that seemed to present one template for modern women's midlife journey, even though today it feels a little watered down compared to my journey. What is significant about this film though is its emphasis on reconnecting with the feminine, which happens through sexuality, the body, and love. Perhaps my lived experience reflects a readiness to go deeper when it comes to reconciling the feminine and masculine, spirit and matter, sexuality and spirituality.

Chapter 9

Summary of Findings

Research Questions

What might a depth psychological exploration of women's experience of the relationship between their sexuality and spirituality contribute to Jungian theory of individuation? How might the researcher's lived experience be a reflection of a collective urge to reconcile the perceived opposing instincts of sex and religion?

Introduction

Researching the connection between sexuality and spirituality was the last topic I would have imagined pursuing in my journey to secure a PhD. In fact, the task of exploring how the relationship between sexuality and spirituality seems to have been the driving force of my individuation journey felt thrust upon me by my unconscious. Insight after insight erupted from my unconscious via films, dreams, synchronicities, and my first post-divorce relationship with Phillip in intensely embodied ways. The films seemed to be speaking to me directly, and the life-changing relationship with Phillip swept me up like the character of Dorothy in the film *Wizard of Oz* (LeRoy, M., 1939), taking me to a strange realm where I came into deeper relationship with my Self and God. What was striking was the bodily arousal I felt as I became more receptive to experiencing more depth whether with my partner or with what felt like a transpersonal presence. There was no difference.

After researching texts that explore and expand C. G. Jung's theory of individuation, as well as the connection between sexuality and spirituality, it now seems to make perfect sense why my journey would be driven by these two drives. Love,

sexuality, and spirituality happen to be my psychological wounds, and it has been these wounds that have acted as a doorway to personal healing and archetypal energies that seem to be seeking expression through me. In addition, this doorway seems to be particularly present in the space between film images and me, resulting in further eruptions of insights that might reflect something that transcends my personal life, some new expression of archetypal energies emerging from the collective unconscious.

My experience exists within the context of coming of age as a first-generation middle-class white woman in the 1980s. When considering this particular decade through a feminist lens, it felt like a time of great progress and also of great resistance. I personally witnessed the granting of one of the first partnership positions to a woman at one of the largest law firms in my state. The women who *made it* though seemed to visibly struggle with the tension between being accepted by this new *class* of male employees and identifying with the women who were perceived to be occupying lower status positions. At the same time, major political campaigns emerged as a backlash against women's progress, for example junior Congressman Newt Gingrich's *Contract with America* and the fundamentalist Christian campaign led by James Dobson called *Focus on the Family*. It is difficult to overestimate the impact of the constant demonization of women as *family wreckers* and *sexual deviants* on the psyches of women at the time and which remains today. There seemed to have been a correlation between women's progress, especially related to control over their reproductive systems, and protests that women's control equaled sin and the fear of the demise of the family. I wonder if there are other women who carry the same combination of wounds as me and

whether they have made the same connection between spirituality and sexuality when it comes to their psychological and spiritual development.

It was not until I possessed a framework for exploring my experiences and my ability to find the connection between sexuality and spirituality that my wounds began to transform into healing experiences. In addition to personal healing, I now see further value in my lived experience as a contribution to new collective consciousness. Archetypal energies related to sexuality and spirituality may be seeking to evolve how they manifest in individuals and culture. My experience and insights are important and are likely not mine alone. As Edinger (2015) suggests, my experience having to do with the relationship between sexuality and spirituality may contribute to what will emerge from the collective in the form of a new God-image (p. xxii).

Sexual Attraction as an Invitation from God

In the analysis of the history of my strongest attractions, I found that the attraction to specific men was to more than the physical person and was accompanied by a kind of spiritual pull. I refer to these men as Doug (fifth grade), Adam (seventh grade), Tom (college) and Phillip (first post-divorce relationship). The earliest attractions were felt via eye contact that was intensely exposing and caused me to feel deeply vulnerable. The first three attractions with Doug, Adam, and Tom occurred within a religious context although this was not known or obvious. The spiritual context of the attraction with Tom in college was more direct in hindsight but not clear at the time. I sought to connect with Tom through my sexuality and my secret exploration of a pocket-sized *New Testament*. I feel blessed to have been able to reconnect with him recently and listen to him share in his own words what his attraction for me felt like for him. He referred to my energy as

Goddess energy and suggested that I saw what was deep in his soul even if I was unaware. It was 25 years after our brief relationship that he admitted his love for me and how our sexual relations contributed to his own sexual healing and psychological development. His admission set me free from my self-judgment that he rejected me because of my sexuality.

Not having a framework for relating to my sexuality in a positive way, coupled with negative messages about women by Christians who happened to be in positions of authority, caused suffering that led to a kind of unconscious detachment from a deeper part of myself. I would go on to marry a man I loved not realizing that my capacity for deep relationship with him, with myself, and with God was stunted. Perhaps my unconscious sought refuge in this relationship, because for 24 years I would be able to hide from this—until that stopped working. My desperation to find out where I went wrong perhaps contributed to my willingness to be vulnerable enough to accept what would come next. When I began my post-divorce six-month online dating phase, I purposely set an agenda only of learning how to relate to men again. Other than the fear of having to possibly reject someone, I was completely open to each encounter as a life lesson.

I knew when I had had enough, and as I let go of intentionally finding more dates, I was swept up in what became my first post-divorce relationship with Phillip. Not until this analysis did I realize that the connection I felt the moment I met this younger man resembled what I felt during the intense attractions I felt earlier in my life. The difference was that both Phillip and I accepted the invitation to the adventure. I would not realize the irony of this attraction until long after the relationship began, but it did not seem to be

an accident that the relationship would force the reconciliation between what felt like the opposing forces of sexuality and spirituality. In this case, intense attraction was indeed an invitation from God.

Capacity for Vulnerability Hindered by a Wounded Masculine

One of the things that surprised me during my research was how my thinking evolved when it came to the masculine. I always had an intuitive sense of empathy for men, alongside my anger for what men have done to women and my compensating advocacy for women, especially related to their reproductive rights. Whereas earlier in this document, I suggest that it is unclear what it means to be naturally feminine, I did not realize that this is probably true when it comes to the masculine. New evidence and theories outlined by Eisler (2011) suggest that before the emergence of patriarchy, which she calls a dominator form of social organization, there were examples of more partnership-oriented societies where the feminine and masculine were equally revered, and where women were not subordinate to men. If this is true then it is also unclear what it means to be naturally masculine. Just as women could be seen to be over domesticated by culture, men have been desensitized, trained and rewarded for being dominators. Even in today's culture where I suspect most men support women's right to self-determination, if women's progress is mutually exclusive of men's self-worth, then men are put in a difficult situation psychologically. This is what ended up playing out at the end of my relationship with Phillip. After two and a half years of dramatic sexual and spiritual transformation experienced by me through our relationship, my eventual ending of the relationship seemed to be received by him as a rejection of his self-worth. My declaration that I had access to God without him or any man seemed to be felt as emasculating as

reflected in his question to me about whether I was rejecting his position. Some women may cheer at the taking down of a man's identity, but it was torture for me to witness how my stand for self-determination seemed to impact his sense of masculine identity.

From the beginning of my relationship with Phillip, it was clear that I was wandering into new territory. The awkwardness that never went away I took to be a sign that I was opening myself up to going deeper with someone. I often felt completely naked. My technique for surviving the constant awkward moments was to humorously claim it and say it aloud, which of course made things even more awkward. As I embraced my awkwardness with him, my need for control and defensive posturing lessened. I came to understand the awkward feeling as my budding feminine relatedness and evidence that I had hidden in my masculine for most of the first part of my life. My review of texts by Eisler (2011), Gilligan & Snider (2018), and Brown (2007) contributed to a new insight about the relationship between my feminine and masculine. All three of these women scholars successfully detached the masculine from the male gender in my mind. Eisler (2011) speaks of patriarchy as a dominator model of social organization, Gilligan (2018) refers to patriarchy as a defensive mechanism meant to avoid vulnerability, and Brown (2007) speaks about vulnerability as a human capacity needed for relatedness. All three scholars point to new evidence that suggests human beings are hardwired for relatedness, and in fact love and pleasure are evolutionary forces. Just as women's progress is matched by an *almost* equal resistance by some men, the forces moving us towards reconciliation between the masculine and feminine energies are matched by an *almost* equal resistance from the dominator model of social organization,

which relies on hierarchy and ranking. I take comfort in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s suggestion that "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Men are also victims of the dominator model of social organization, because their sense of worthiness depends on establishing their dominance over someone. In order to be considered successful in this wounded masculine culture, women also must establish dominance over someone, usually other women, as reflected in the animosity sometimes present between *women who work* and *stay at home moms*. Because this system places women at the bottom, partnership and equality are often perceived as threats to a man's sense of worth. Women who have developed their masculine at the expense of their feminine feed into this model when they rank themselves over other women. Women who care about men seem to suffer as they hold the tension between breaking out of limiting conventions and the impact this has on men, especially those they love. I have come to have more of an appreciation both for the suffering of men and for the need for a new masculine to emerge that does not rely on hierarchy and ranking. Eisler's (2011) work seems to challenge the assumption that the masculine is naturally hierarchical and aggressive, and I agree with her. I suggest that the masculine does not necessarily preclude the capacity to be vulnerable. I have experienced what seems like a new vulnerability in men that are part of the Millennial generation, of which Phillip was a part.

The Role of the Body

My intellect could only take me so far when it came to understanding what was happening as I consciously began relating to my unconscious. My body seemed to be the doorway to or sometimes ground zero when it came to gaining deeper insights especially

related to the connection between sexuality and spirituality. Archetypal energies seemed always to enter consciousness through my body. The embodied dream of feeling love and safety while falling backwards in the dark down a hill brought instant healing that could not have come through my intellect. Unexpected sexual arousal from experiencing detachment from the ego's need to control in order to experience true surrender and receptivity brought understanding that could not have come through my intellect. The breathtaking beginning to what would become a transformative relationship and which led to the insight that I had loved this man at first sight, was experienced through my body, not my intellect. Archetypal energies have always been experienced first through my body.

These embodied experiences brought my attention to my body as a necessary partner to my intellect. Whereas my intellect was well developed, my body had work to do when it came to developing the capacity to drop its defensive posture. Awkwardness was and continues to be felt in my body, and as I grew in my capacity to be awkward and vulnerable, I also grew in my ability to surrender. Surrendering means relinquishing control over an outcome or over the need to prevent things from going awry. Surrendering began to feel like a willingness to receive something, which implies a deep trust or faith in something beyond the literal. Setting aside all expected outcomes when it came to the relationship with Phillip, I surrendered to something deeper happening. Over time, a flood of spontaneous images began to emerge, including the desire for my partner to thrust his penis in my mouth, beautifully decorated chalices and bowls, and light coming into and going out of my head. All of these images brought intense sexual arousal during times of solitude, prayer, and meditation during a time I was not able to be

physically intimate with my partner. Further, being physically intimate with Phillip in a way that excluded penetration brought me into deeper relationship with my body and sexuality, contributing to my capacity to receive sexually and spiritually. Receiving seemed to come before giving sexually and spiritually. Just as the masculine capacity to reflect requires the feminine capacity to receive that which is reflected upon, the masculine spirit may require the feminine embodied experience on which spirit emerges as form.

Film Expressions of Reconciliation Between Matter and Spirit

The first time I noticed a nuanced presentation of the feminine and masculine in a way that was detached from gender was when I considered three science fiction films in a paper through this lens: *Interstellar* (Thomas, Nolan, & Obst, 2014) starring Matthew McConaughey, *The Martian* (Kinberg, Scott, Schaefer, Sood, & Huffam, 2015), starring Matt Damon, and *Gravity* (Cuaron, 2013), starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney. In all three films, there was not only an interesting combination of feminine and masculine reflected in the main characters, love and relatedness seemed to be as important as science and technology as the solution to the problem or crisis. It is interesting though that the film which had the strongest effect on my understanding of the masculine and feminine, as well as Jung's theory of anima and animus, was the one that entered me through the doorway of my body. The first time I saw *In Your Eyes* (Hill, 2014) I was captivated by the clear separation of how the feminine and masculine were presented. Instead of dismissing the characters as simple stereotypes of the feminine and masculine, I ended up experiencing both characters as different pieces of me. In fact, I am still not clear about whether the characters were indeed actual separate characters in the

movie. I became obsessed with watching this movie again and again; conscious that it symbolized something I was trying to work out in my relationship with my own masculine and feminine. I believe that coming into relationship with my body heightened my sensitivity and receptivity to what this film had to offer me.

My reactions to a series of science fiction films seen during 2016-2019 surprised me. Perhaps I was moving beyond the lens of the masculine and feminine and became open to what the films reflected about more specifically the reconciliation between science and religion or spirit and matter. From *Black Panther* (Feige, 2018), to *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018), to *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron & Landau, 2019) to *Captain Marvel* (Boden & Fleck, 2019), the relationship between the feminine and masculine evolved to a relationship between spirit and matter. Interestingly, whereas some might define this as a battle between science and religion, I now tend to put science and religion in the same camp as spirit. Until recently, I saw science as the *how* and religion as the *why*, but I now perceive science and religion as simply words without real meaning. They both seem to represent the masculine in a one-sided manner for me. Both science and religion seem to have been hijacked by the dominator model of social organization, or the wounded masculine, which relies on hierarchy and ranking. To reconcile spirit and matter, perhaps what is needed is healing of both the feminine and masculine. These particular science fiction films seem to bring to life the dynamic of masculine healing as well as feminine healing. In *Black Panther* (Feige, 2018), T'Challa who can call on the power of the Black Panther struggles to come to terms with his father's actions, which prioritize sovereignty over love. In *Aquaman* (Wan, 2018), Arthur struggles to heal his wounded masculine as he humbles himself to what is in his shadow, and in *Alita: Battle Angel* (Cameron &

Landau, 2019), Alita looks on helplessly as her love interest Hugo is dismembered and falls to Earth. For me, he symbolizes the masculine as wounded by Christianity.

Can Christianity Evolve Beyond Patriarchy?

I ask this question with great humility, and I would not have thought to address it in this chapter if not for my chair's curiosity about my feeling on the topic. On the one hand, I do not feel qualified to answer the question, and on the other hand I have an opinion based only upon my personal experience. About a hundred years ago C. G. Jung, one of the fathers of depth psychology and the discoverer of the collective unconscious, wrestled with whether Christianity could remain relevant as a God image. Oddly, after decades of being exposed to sexist and misogynist rhetoric in my personal experience, I found myself coming back to this form of spirituality that seems to be continually misused and misunderstood. Even after reviewing the texts of feminist scholars, I now have concluded that for me Christianity is not redeemable. I know that is a strong statement, but the evolution of consciousness could be said to be surpassing the evolution of Christian dogma. There is too much ignoring of the trauma that Christianity has caused. Alas, it is up to the individual to evolve in order to contribute to the evolution of human consciousness. I agree with Edinger's (1975/1984) suggestion that what God wants most is to know himself/herself through the human experience.

Jung's Theory of Anima and Animus

At first I thought I was a slow learner when it came to C. G. Jung's theory of the masculine and feminine as personified in his theory of animus and anima. One way to look at the anima is to see it as the *Other* or everything that is unconscious, which typically is also devalued. In fact Edinger (1975/1984) refers to the anima as the

collective unconscious, which of course is mysterious and not definable. Jung equates the anima with the feminine and ends up projecting a lot onto those who are supposed to personify the feminine, namely women. Whereas he attempts to detangle the feminine from gender, the most he can do is bring consciousness to the fact that the feminine has been devalued and projected onto literal women. And this is a great service. Some Jungians that appear in the male form continue to project onto women some kind of mysterious capability and responsibility that women have to bring men into better relationship with their feminine. Why is this the responsibility of women?

What is most important is that my lived experience does not seem to always match Jung's theories. Of course I could be mistaken in my application of theory to my lived experience, but from the start, theory has not seemed to match my intuitive understanding of the deeper meaning behind Jung's theories. In my lived experience, not only did the masculine seem to be held by my mother, the feminine seemed to be held by my male romantic partner Phillip. As I reflect on my relationship with my children, I have felt the burden of carrying both the feminine and masculine for them. In conversations with other professional women about my age, there seems to be a conscious awareness of the need for balance in their children of the feminine and masculine. They may not use the language of the feminine and masculine but they definitely do not feel the masculine comes only through the father or someone of the male gender. For example, a recent conversation with one of my best friends was around managing the tension between cultivating a strong relationship with our sons and the need for our sons to in a way reject their mothers as they go off into the world as young men. In both of our families, we as mothers have played a greater role in managing this

development of both the feminine and masculine than the fathers. Interestingly, we both belong to the generation referred to as *Generation X* and we are married to men who are of the generation referred to as *Baby Boomers*. My son and I have an intensely close emotional and intellectual relationship, and I have been well aware of his need to detach from me symbolically as he finds his relationship to a more archetypal mother. I am aware that the sporadic communication from my son now that he is a freshman in college reflects his appropriate detachment from me. Whereas I agree with Robert Johnson's (1989) suggestion that literal mothers sometimes are not aware of how their need to remain close to their sons gets in the way of their development as independent adults (p. 27), he does not recognize that it is sometimes the mother who has greater awareness of and is the parent who manages this tension. I suggest that in some cases it is the mother who not only has more of a balance of feminine and masculine but that it is also the mother who is transmitting this balance through parenting. This seems to be the case in both of our families, and I wonder again about the wounded masculine in men.

Conclusion

In my research I sought to explore women's experience of sexuality as a path to God, specifically through the lens of the Jungian theory of individuation. Secondarily, I wondered about how film images may be reflecting something new emerging from the collective unconscious related to reconciling these two seeming opposing archetypal energies. I emphasize *seeming* because new theories have emerged based on evidence showing that sexuality and spirituality were not always in opposition. What I found was that my personal individuation process seemed to have been driven by the connection between sexuality and spirituality, which perhaps reflected an intuitive knowing of their

once-celebrated union. This makes sense because not only are these personal wounds, but I discovered they are generational wounds as well. It is not clear why I possess a heightened sensitivity to film images, but certain films seem to elicit spontaneous insights from my unconscious that are related to the reconciliation of certain pairs of opposites. These opposites evolved from the masculine and feminine, to sexuality and spirituality, to spirit and matter. My experiences with film evolved from the working out of personal complexes to larger cultural issues having to do with religion. These insights emerged in surprising ways.

In my research I found that reconciliation between sexuality and spirituality for me required coming into relationship with my body, which required the capacity to be vulnerable and receptive so that I could receive both sexually and spiritually. The arousal that I experienced when I was able to be vulnerable felt the same whether it was in the sexual or spiritual realm. Being vulnerable and receptive seemed to require the capacity to surrender control. I explored how it seemed to be the wounded masculine that is preventing the capacity to be vulnerable enough to deeply connect, which new evidence suggests is a hard-wired human need. At the beginning of my research, my focus was primarily on reconnecting with the feminine, but I now believe that healing the wounded masculine needs as much attention. The work of Eisler (2011), Gilligan (2018), and Brown (2007) offer hope in that they seem to be successfully detaching the capacity to be vulnerable from gender. Further, my lived experience seems to bring to life Eisler's (2011) suggestion that spirituality and sexuality are not only partners but that sexual pleasure is a natural evolutionary force that contributes to increased consciousness in humanity when related to consciously.

It was depth psychology and specifically C. G. Jung's theory of individuation that provided a framework and offered tools to explore this topic. I believe that the last thing Jung wanted was for his theories to become dogma. He was instrumental in elevating the status of the feminine, even if his efforts were limited by the stereotypes of the time. It makes sense that early women Jungians identified their liberated intellect with the masculine because it was the male Jung who served as their mentor. This feels like an exciting time to contribute to Jung's theories, especially when it comes to women's lived experience and how it reflects new expressions of the archetypal energies related to sexuality and spirituality.

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Figure 1: Photo of Doorway



Figure 1. Photo of Doorway in Barcelona, Spain, by Author.

Figure 2: Drawing of Embodied Dream



Figure 2. Drawing of embodied dream after active imagination, by Author.

Figure 3: Drawing of Spontaneous Image

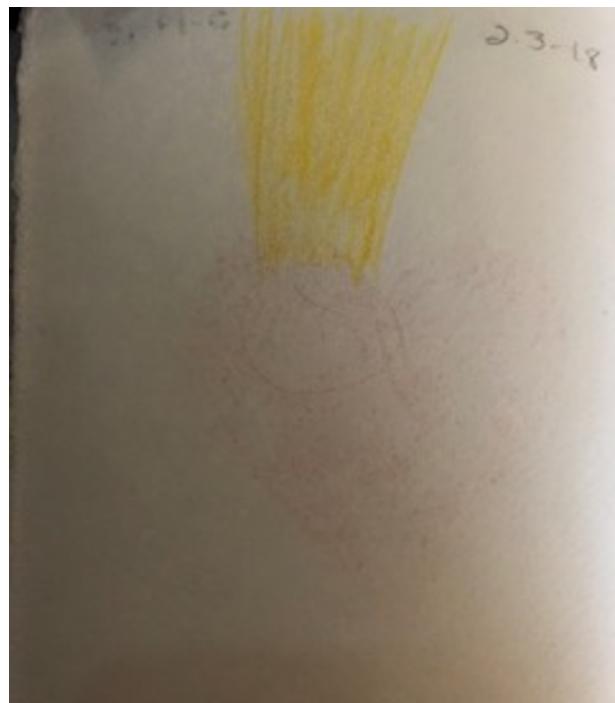


Figure 3. Drawing of spontaneous image accompanying sexual arousal resulting from experience of surrender and receptivity, by Author.

Figure 4: Drawing of Second Spontaneous Image



Figure 4. Drawing of second spontaneous image accompanying sexual arousal resulting from experience of surrender and receptivity, by Author.

Figure 5: Drawing of Dream Image

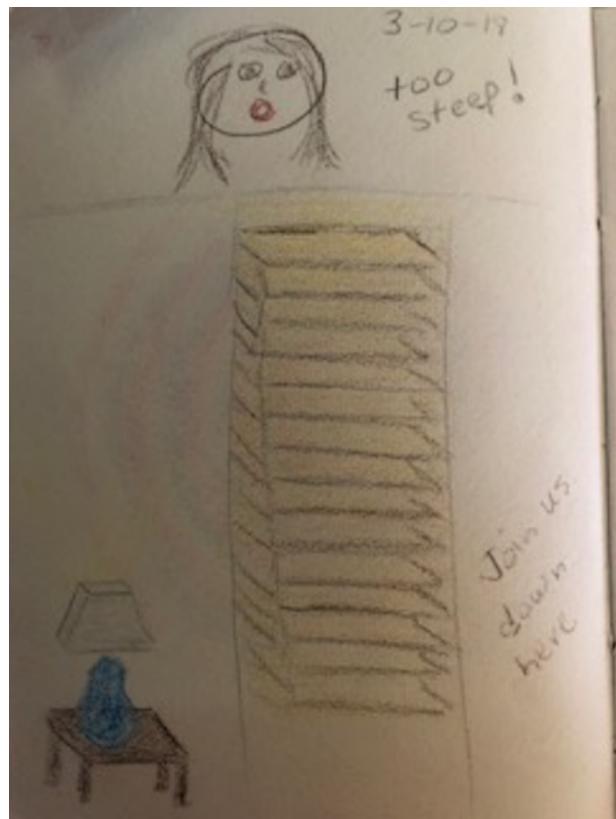


Figure 5. Drawing of dream image, by Author.

Figure 6: Drawing of Third Spontaneous Image

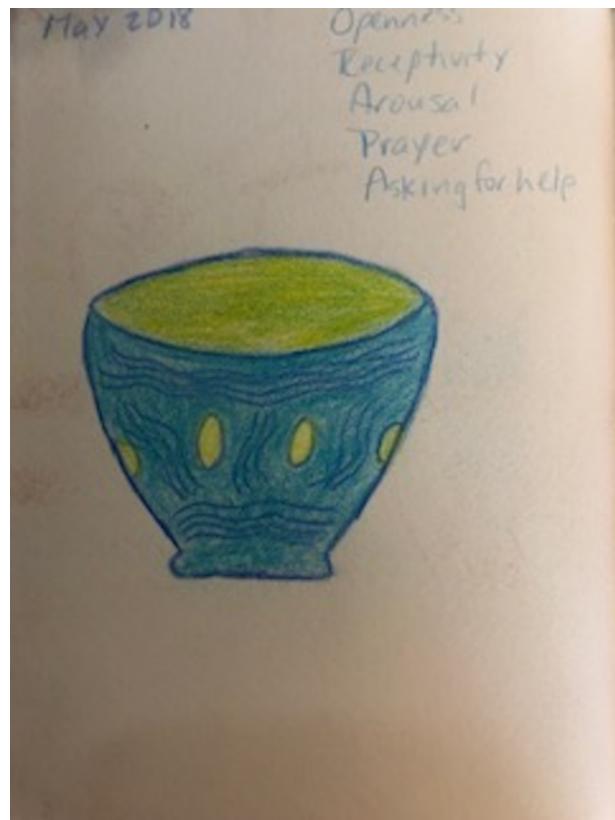


Figure 6. Drawing of third spontaneous image following sexual arousal related to experience of surrender and receptivity, by Author.

Figure 7: Drawing of Spontaneous Image

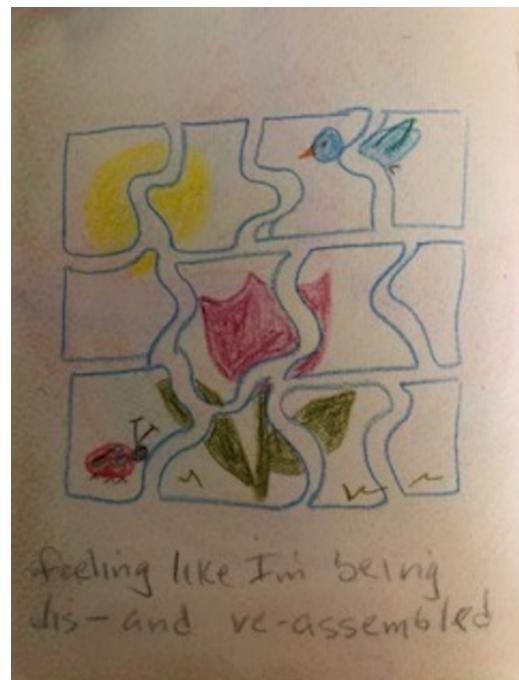


Figure 7. Drawing of spontaneous image, by Author.

Figure 8: Drawing of Dream Image

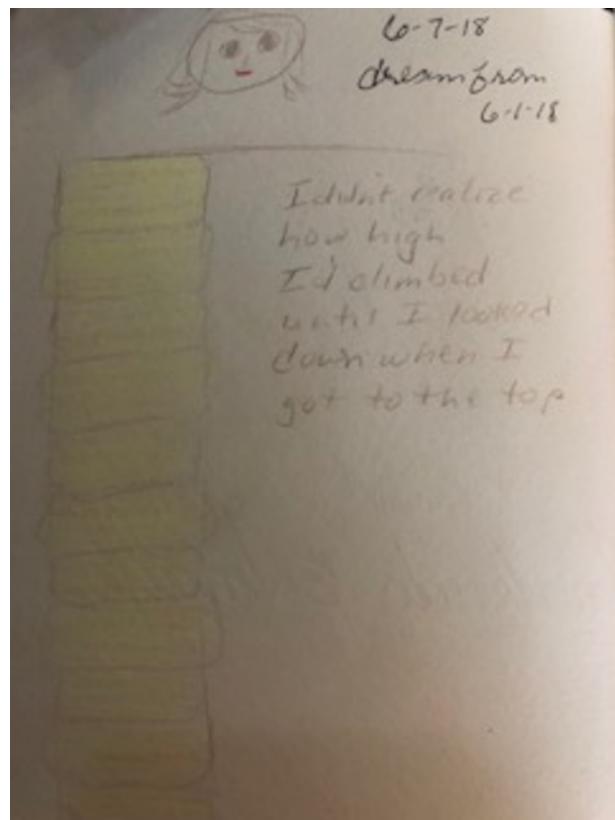


Figure 8. Drawing of dream image, by Author.

Figure 9: Drawing of Spontaneous Image



Figure 9. Drawing of spontaneous image of union of Mary and Christ, by Author.

Figure 10: Drawing of Recurring Fantasy Image

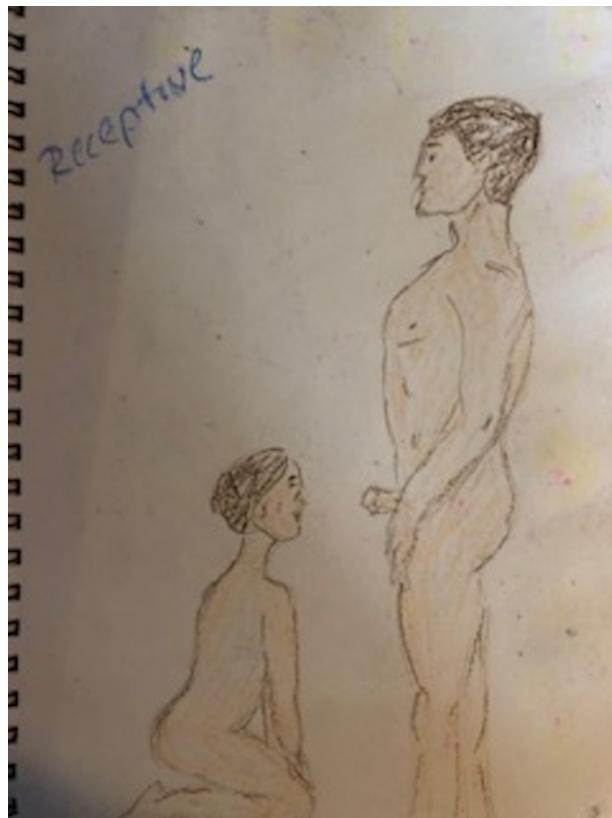


Figure 10. Drawing of recurring spontaneous fantasy, by Author.

Figure 11: Drawing of Dream Image



Figure 11. Drawing of dream image during periods of menopausal hotflashes, by Author.

Figure 12: Drawing of Dream Image.



Figure 12. Drawing of dream image, by Author.

Figure 13: Drawing of Dream Image



Figure 13: Drawing of Dream Image, by Author