Bordo (2008) Anorexia Nervosa Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture

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Bordo addresses anorexia and its indirect relationship to the culture in which it thrives, not surprisingly but that of the United States and countries with similar view (but on what?? food, beauty? please clarify which views you are referring to those in accordance with the same view Americans take). Her title is very fitting for psychopathology is “the final outcome of all that is wrong with a culture” (Bordo 2008: page number) and anorexia is by far the most fitting aspect of our culture that is long overdue for adjustment (this is a pretty dramatic statement on your part). She argues in the article that anorexia is a reflection of the central ills of our culture which derive from our “historical heritage of disdain for the body to our modern fear of loss of control over our future”. direct quotes need page numbers (Bordo 2008: page number)

Bordo identifies three axes that are derived from our culture that correspond to the basis of anorexia. They are the dualist axis, the control axis, and the gender/power axis. The Dualist axis concerns the view that humans have two parts: the “spirit”/”mind” and the body which is “alien”. The idea is that the “spirit” and “mind” are “glued” or “nailed” to the alien body. The body is viewed as a confinement and a limitation to the mind. The body is the all that threatens our attempts at control and without the body our limits would be void; our mind/spirit would soar. Yikes--this sentence is very complex and you lost me--please simplify this. In the Dualist axis we’re constantly in battle with our bodies trying to “subdue the spontaneities of the body”, that is to “cease to experience our hungers and desires” direct quotes need page numbers. To the anorexic person hunger is an alien person; unable to control their body’s need for food they are in constant battle with their body with the mind prevailing over the body’s desire for nutrition. The Control axis occurs in a culture when people no longer feel they can control any aspect of their lives: personal relationships, job performance. It’s felt that the only thing they can control is the food they eat and the physical exertions they apply to themselves in the Dualist axis this link to Bynum 1985 on this wiki. Their diet becomes the only way to control a part of their life. The Gender/Power axis relates to the power commercials have over people as well as the power men had/have over women. A surprising number of anorectics “express a characteristic fear of growing up to be mature, sexually developed, and potentially reproductive women” direct quotes need page numbers. This view develops during puberty and usually with a father who wished for a boy and had to emotionally snub their daughter when she began to develop. Anorectics wish to avoid the woman’s body and prefer to stay boyish: flat chested, small hips and lower body fat content. Also, many anorectics began their eating disorder when they were persuaded to not pursue traditionally male careers and to choose a job more acceptable to their sex.

The article is insightful and delves into subjects that are overlooked concerning anorexia and its causes. The article was originally created published in the 1980s so it’s a bit outdated and although it addresses issues that are still around relevant things have changed in the past thirty years (you are being very vague here--what sorts of things, specifically?) and to get an update on this article would be great, for instance whether the three axes still apply to today’s culture (useful to note somewhere in this entry that these axes appear to be Bordo’s own creation). Some of the things I wished were discussed in the article is the role of media and its effect on anorectics.

This was a good choice but in several places your sentences are so complex it is difficult to understand your summary. Work towards streamlining your writing. There is some critical commentary but you could have gone much farther, perhaps with reference to the critical thinking handout.