

# **Myth and Body: Pandora's Legacy in a Post-Modern World**

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Being a Jungian analyst at this time in history is not particularly comfortable in most psychological or intellectual circles. Jungians are supposed to believe in universal human characteristics called "archetypes" and to support the theory that we all share a collective unconscious. Although Jung's work has some popular appeal, his ideas now seem antiquated in the light of current philosophical and scientific approaches. Mostly his work is not taught in college psychology departments, medical schools, or other places where it could have a broad impact on the way psychotherapy is practiced in the US today.

Because Jung's psychology is grounded in a theory of universals, what all human beings have in common, it appears to be in conflict with many fashionable post-modern theories. In the past two decades, any belief in universal truths or characteristics has come under close scrutiny and often been dismissed, at least in academic circles. Post-modernism is a broad cultural critique that has challenged theories of self, coherence, and almost all and any claims to truth. These are hard times for a Jungian who is supposed to believe in a universal Self, not only in characteristics that are shared among all people. While I have found post-modernism to be very useful in revising Jung's psychology, I also find it to be too skeptical about our claims to universal or common human elements of meaning. I hope to show why and how this skepticism can interfere with getting a bigger picture of ourselves in context.

In the first part of my talk I want to show why a belief in universals is linked to my claim that mythology is still relevant in a post-modern world. I will connect my ideas with the issue of human embodiment, the particular form in which we humans occur, with its perceptions, cognitions and emotions. Then I want to illustrate the way I use myth, as a story of I'll use the myth of Pandora and lives. I'll talk about the double form of contemporary Pandora-ism.

Finally, I'll talk a bit about why myth is important in doing psychotherapy. Sometimes my clients are living within a troubling myth they take to be the only possible "reality." Many of us do that. Psychotherapy, when it works, changes myth into metaphor and allows us to play with a number of realities.

## **Archetype and Universals**

To back up a bit, the formal definition of Jung's concept of archetype is "primary imprint." He was referring to what you might call "hard wiring" or patterned responses in human beings -- ways of thinking and feeling that occur in all cultures of people, under all conditions. At the beginning of this century, psychology was just getting going and it seemed that the study of human development and behavior should focus first on what was universal and then on what might be individual. We seem to be at the other end of the spectrum at the end of century, with a pervasive belief that we can only study what is individual, cultural or local, and not even attempt what is universal.

As a practicing psychotherapist and a psychological researcher, I think otherwise. If I didn't know what patterns to use as a backdrop to an individual case, I'd never know what direction to go. For example, a twenty-eight year old man comes to see me because he is uncertain he has chosen the right career. He's in graduate school preparing for a profession and he wonders if it's "right" for him. But he doesn't just wonder, he worries and frets, is anxious day and night. One thing that I know is that young adulthood is ending and adulthood is beginning at twenty-eight in our society. Although the age for this passage varies from society to society, in all societies there is a point after which young people are expected to be adult and join society in the appropriate ways. If they fail, there are serious consequences -- explicit or implicit. So I do not consider this young man's anxiety to be primarily neurotic; I see it as developmental, fitted to

his age. Many times a day I measure a particular response or image against the background of what I expect from a human being -- at this age, of this sex, etc.

Carl Jung often used the idea of archetype in a way that now seems antiquated -- to mean something like a Kantian category or a Platonic idea, a sort of organizing form for our mental life. In his later work, after about 1944, he revised his thinking. He defined archetype to mean a universal inclination (predisposition) to form an image in a highly charged emotional state. The image would have the same form, recognizable the world over, as for example the image of a Great Mother. Jung began to link emotion with his idea of archetype in a new way. His final definition of archetype was an innate releasing mechanism: if an infant was overwhelmed with needs -- hungry, enraged, afraid -- it formed an image of a Terrible Mother (witch, bitch, hag) that was the opposite of the soothing, nurturing, gratifying Great Mother (although both of these images were activated by the same actual mother). This image of a Terrible Mother would recur repeatedly when certain right cues were present. Hear certain sounds, see certain things and all of the emotions surrounding the archetypal image would be released. In an adult relationship, say with his wife, the now fully grown-up man would feel the same emotions he did with his mother when his wife said or did certain things. The child who perceived his mother as a depressed, denying, and demanding Terrible Mother would, as an adult, experience his wife in the same way when she cried, complained, or criticized. The new situation would seem just like the old.

The idea of an innate releasing mechanism linked to universal human emotions has been carried forward by a famous contemporary British psychoanalyst named **John Bowlby**. He and his followers have developed a theory called "attachment theory" that shows that **human beings everywhere are hard-wired to respond in certain ways in relationships with each other: attachment, separation and loss. No matter how rational we try to be, how much we might struggle to overcome our emotions, we will continue to bond and want to protect this bond, to fear separation, and to protect ourselves from rejection etc.**

In addition, there are now many researchers and theorists of human emotion (called affect theory), people like **Tomkins, Lewis and Izard**, who have shown that **certain primary emotions are part of every infant at birth -- joy, sadness, fear, aggression, disgust, curiosity -- and that later secondary emotions develop in everyone after about 18 months of age. These later emotions are called "self-conscious" emotions--shame, pride, envy, guilt, embarrassment.** All of these occur in everyone everywhere. Universal emotions are connected with universal images that recur everywhere: great and terrible parents, dragons/monsters, magicians, madonnas, whores, heroes and demons/devils. These are the archetypal images that Jung initially thought arose from a substrate **outside human experience. We can now say that they arise quite directly from human experience. They are universal because they occur in every human being in our emotional hard-wiring, our perceptions of a particular world, and our biological life cycle and what it demands of us.**

Attachment theory and affect theory, as aspects of embodiment, can stand up to the challenge of deconstruction and post-modern skepticism. Even though we are complex, self-recognizing and reflective beings, we are not free. We are all bound by the forms of our bodies, our reproductive systems, our life cycles and the inevitability of our deaths; these are inescapable and non-negotiable.

Over millennia, mythology has developed narratives about these universal human conditions. Although mythology has served many functions for societies and cultures, a major function it continues to serve is that of illustrating the meanings of universal emotions. When a mythology is alive, it forms the basis of what we call "reality." At the end of the twentieth century, **our major Western mythology is empirical science -- its most currently captivating forms are genetics, astrophysics, neuroscience, and subatomic physics. The tales that are told from these myths are amazing. Most of us assume they are reality.** We often accept biological explanations for our moods and meanings (a book about an antidepressant, Prozac, was number two on the *New York Times* best-seller list when I wrote this)

although we long to believe that earlier stories of heroes, witches, giants and monsters will save us from our fates (a book by a Jungian analyst about native American and other myths was number one on the *New York Times* best-seller list). But the major myth of our time is scientific realism whatever the alternative views might be.

For most of us the ancient myths function more as metaphors, allowing us to see aspects of our emotional lives as we penetrate their meanings. For a psychoanalyst like myself, though, the ancient myths are still relevant in the post-modern world because they connect to the archetypal meanings of our emotions, the ways in which we perceive and respond because of universal constraints of human life.

For example, some years ago I wrote an interpretation of the "Hymn to Demeter" -- a Greek myth from the Eleusynian mysteries. I had just reread the myth after having had major surgery, for a condition that could have been (but was not) life-threatening. In the shadow of my own death, the myth revealed something new to me, not about the meaning of spring and the cycles of nature, or the bond between a mother and a daughter (also legitimate readings of the myth), but about the meaning of death. What I saw was that the mother's (Demeter's) loss of her daughter to the underworld (death) aroused in her all of the typical signs of grief: rage, bargaining, searching, telling her story, apathy, and a desire to substitute for the loss. Here in this ancient myth was the exact formulation of grief that John Bowlby and his followers had discovered in studying the behaviors of war orphans and other children whose parents had died. The Demeter story went through all the stages of grief and into the consequences of substituting for a loss too quickly. It was remarkable to me that an ancient myth could be as precise as contemporary scientific research in charting the process of a universal human experience, grief.

**From all that I have learned about human development, through research, theories and the practice of psychotherapy, I would say that we must understand our emotions and the images connected to them in order to understand ourselves.** Without this, we are likely to feel alienated, unknowable, isolated and adrift -- a fairly good description of the existential and deconstructed selves. I am not against post-modernism and its effects on psychology and other disciplines. On the contrary, I consider myself to be a post-modernist. I am not a deconstructionist, though.

Deconstruction is a skeptical philosophy of doubt and dismantling, based on a negative assumption that human lives are governed mostly by power arrangements. It is also a commentary on the fragmentation of our period of time, an era when cherished hopes and beliefs have been undermined repeatedly through insane, hateful or wasteful human actions. We've witnessed atrocities such as the holocaust. We've lived with the threat of nuclear annihilation, and the fear that materialism will overtake the delicate balance of our ecological systems. Our cities are crumbling and we confront the miseries of homelessness and disease in a way more visible than ever before. Losing faith in human reason may be a necessary step in trying to understand what has led to the current chaos. And yet to undermine the belief in a common human experience is to eradicate the significance of the most obvious aspect of our existence: the human body.

**The ways in which we perceive, think and feel are bound to be universal because we come in the same package the world over. We all enter life through birth and leave through death. There are variations on these themes, but the themes are themselves very powerful.** If we fail to study or understand what is common to humanity, especially in this period of despair, we reinforce a dangerous belief in individualism -that we are isolated from each other, that we are strangers in a strange world.

### **The Story of Pandora**

I could say much more about the importance of understanding universals, but I want to turn instead to a particular myth, one that is still alive in our post-modern world. It is the story of the first woman in Greek mythology and it shows us a lot about how "woman" was constructed in ancient times and how she continues to be known. **Exactly like Eve in the Garden of Eden, this Greek first woman is both the first female mortal and the instigator of mortality in the human race. To be mortal means to die,**

**and both Eve and Pandora bring death into the world. This is a curious reversal of the fact that women bring life into the world, but it says something about the meaning of "woman" within a religion dominated by male gods.**

I am using a summary here of Hesiod's account of the Pandora story. Pandora is created as a punishment to Prometheus. Prometheus was a Titan (old god) who **had made men from clay and given them fire** to help them develop civilization. Prometheus had stolen fire from the gods to give it to men. Zeus, the Olympian god in charge, enraged at Prometheus for his theft of fire (that should have remained an immortal power), says to him ". . . you are happy that you stole the fire, and outwitted my thinking; but it will be a great sorrow to you, and to men who come after. As the price of fire I will give them an evil, and all men shall fondle this, their evil, close to their hearts, and take delight in it." Zeus laughed long and hard. as **he told the lowly God Hephaestus to mix earth and water and to set in it a voice and strength.** He told Hephaestus to shape a desire-awakening maiden whose face would be like the immortal goddesses. Athena was to teach this creature skills and weaving, Aphrodite was to mist her head in golden endearment and the cruelty of desire that wears out the body, and Hermes was to put in her mind a treacherous nature. In place of a heart, Hermes was to put lies, flattery and disloyalty. Hermes named this creature "Pandora" since all of the Olympians had created her as a "gift" for men. She was to be the bane of men, a destroyer of civilization as powerful as fire.

Before her creation, men had been living without evil, free from laborious work, and from all sicknesses. Before the first woman, things were going very well indeed. It was a virtual paradise. But Pandora discovered a buried earthenware jar and in her impulsive curiosity, she sprang the lid open. Out of the jar, scattering in all directions, were the contents of death, disease, evil and troubles, all of the troubles of mankind. Hope was the only spirit that stayed in the jar as she closed the great lid and contained this one remaining content. As Hesiod describes it, what woman has brought into the world is trouble: . . . troubles by thousands that hover about men, for the earth is full of evil things, and the sea is full of them. There are sicknesses that come to men by day, while in the night moving of themselves they haunt us, bringing sorrow to the mortals (from Lattimore, 1959, lines 54-105, pp. 25-31).

Pandora, whose name literally means "rich in gifts," released both sickness and death into the lives of men. **She introduced the distinction between humans and gods -mortality.** We remember her now largely as having a "box" that released evil things into the world, wastefully through her own curiosity. Although few of us know more than the phrase "Pandora's box," her story says a lot about the contemporary suffering of girls and women and the unspoken meanings that lie behind the commodity of female beauty. I call it a commodity to stress the fact that personal beauty is the only socially condoned power that women are openly encouraged to have as they enter adult life. The power of female appearance is an awful double bind as we can see from the Pandora story.

What are the emotions represented in the story? By and large the Olympian gods play out a drama of self-conscious emotions -- pride, shame, envy, jealousy, guilt -- in their struggles to rule and to possess. Jealously, pride and competition drive Zeus to send Pandora to mankind. She is a symbol of the power struggles between males and the desire to dominate females. Her beauty -- and all of its meanings -- is a pawn in the struggle for male dominance.

Although her beauty is as powerful as fire, it is based on lies and deceit. Men must learn to be wary of it, and to control it. Pandora's beauty is a power commodity among males. It is attractive, but empty. She is dangerous. What she brings to mankind is the ultimate defeat, death itself.

### **The Double Bind of Female Beauty**

The myth of Pandora lives among us still. Journalist and author **Naomi Wolf (1991)** calls our contemporary demands of the female body a "beauty myth." Wolf puts Pandora's story in the framework of contemporary sociobiology and says,

**The beauty myth tells a story: The quality called 'beauty' objectively and universally exists. Women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it. This embodiment is an imperative for women and not for men. . . because it is biological, sexual, and evolutionary: Strong men battle for beautiful women, and beautiful women are more reproductively successful...(p. 12)**

Our current biological story of female beauty -- that strong men battle for beautiful women and want to possess them -- is not so different from the Greek story. Women are seductive through their beauty and men want to bring this power under their control.

For many contemporary women, especially young women, the beauty myth leads to obsessions with slenderness and/or to low self-esteem. Although beauty is neither universal (it's in the eye of the beholder) nor reproductively superior (anthropologists have frequently shown that the more aggressive rather than the more beautiful female is more successful reproductively), female beauty dominates the lives of women and men through the formula that female beauty = power. Wherever I am and whomever I'm with, I overhear evaluative comments about female appearances (sometimes my own comments running through my head). Both women and men evaluate women according to the shapes and sizes of their faces, legs, hips, and breasts. As a psychotherapist and a feminist, I frequently feel helpless to break the link between female appearance and power.

From the Pandora story we can see that identifying with this "power" is a double bind -- you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. If you identify with the image of female beauty, you put yourself into the Pandora box: beautiful but empty. Increasingly as a woman ages, she finds that identification with a beautiful appearance is a losing game. She will lose the game through aging when she no longer looks like Pandora, a "maiden" -- youthful, slender, lovely. To identify with a beautiful appearance and to pursue that power leads to depreciation of her other strengths, and ultimately to depression about falling short of standards. To disidentify with the power of appearance (and "let herself go") usually leads to feeling like an outsider, feelings of low self-confidence, and fears of failing to find a heterosexual partner or to be the object of a certain kind of male regard.

**A double bind**, as documented originally by **Gregory Bateson** and others over the past two decades, is a condition in which there is no right solution. **What keeps a double bind powerful, powerful enough to drive a person crazy, is the sense that it is unescapable. When people feel trapped in a double bind, they feel like they're going crazy. The only way to defeat a double bind is to step outside of it entirely and to stop identifying with either side. In order to do this, one must become very conscious of the origins and meanings of the bind.**

The double bind of female beauty is a well-kept secret or we could not sustain a trillion dollar fashion and cosmetic industry for women, or continue to enroll women in the 12,000 classes of Weight Watchers across the US. **Female beauty is a commodity, largely a commodity of male dominance.**

What's the loss for men in the Pandora approach to female appearance? If we look back to the original myth, we see at once that men are being defeated by the gods when they swallow the Pandora image. When men believe that female beauty is powerful, they will struggle to bring it under their control. Inevitably this leads to competition with other men (to possess beautiful women) and to feelings of helplessness in the presence of beautiful women. Feelings of helplessness can lead to aggressive and dominating responses, even in men who may otherwise be sensitive to women and their concerns. Feeling helpless in the face of female beauty can lead to fantasies of rape and/or to rape itself.

According to researcher and writer Tim Beneke (1982), justification and rationalization of rape are common among men in our society. (We know from studies of college students that they are common among male college students.) Beneke, who investigated men's attitudes about rape after working to rehabilitate male rapists, was shocked to discover that his own attitudes about female beauty fitted with those of the rapist in many ways. The underlying shared meaning was that rape cannot be prevented and

is sometimes necessary because men cannot control their sexual urges when under the influence of a beautiful (i.e. powerful) female person (even if she is a child).

Beneke talked with lawyers, judges, and ordinary men (and with rapists) about how they view rape. He began to see that many communications (jokes, media, advertisements) of everyday life are "rape signs," indicating that rape is natural and even necessary. In jokes, ads, movies, and TV female beauty is often portrayed as power over a man.

The following is an excerpt from an interview published in Beneke's book. He is interviewing "Jay," an ordinary guy from Pittsburgh who would never rape a woman because "it's wrong and unlawful," not because he doesn't want to. When asked about how he feels when he sees a sexy woman, Jay says,

Let's say I see a woman and she looks really pretty and really clean and sexy, and she's giving off very feminine, sexy vibes, I think 'Wow, I would love to make love to her,' but I know she's not really interested. It's a tease. A lot of times a woman knows that she's looking really good and she'll use that and flaunt it, and it makes me feel like she's laughing at me and I feel degraded. . . I don't like the feeling that I'm supposed to stand there and take it. . . **It's a feeling of humiliation, because the woman has forced me to turn off my feelings and react in a way that I really don't want to.** (p.44)

Here is the myth of Pandora in an interview with an ordinary guy. Her beauty is powerful and it's humiliating. He sees the trick. He understands her appearance as a kind of deception. She "knows she's looking really good" and she wants to "use that and flaunt it," What Jay doesn't understand is that the secret code that female beauty = power is a code among men (or male gods and men); it doesn't involve women.

When women dress up or look beautiful they are either (1) trying to be themselves in the ways they were socialized or (2) trying to be attractive, approved and well-regarded as people -- not as power brokers. Female beauty is a scam and women have been its victims, as the Pandora story shows. Young women and girls are encouraged to trade on appearance, to make it a focus. They are openly admired for appearance, in a way they may not be admired for intelligence, and certainly not for aggression or competition. Taking up the challenge of making a beautiful appearance, a young girl or woman does not know that her appearance may be used by men to compete among themselves, as a commodity to be bought and sold, or as a dangerous power to be tamed.

Men, on the other hand, know the code. Many have been immersed in the Pandora myth. They've heard that having a beautiful woman brings admiration from other males. They've heard how a beautiful woman can use her power to humiliate a man. They've also heard that "no can mean yes" and that resistance to having sex should be "worn down." Why do men have such suspicion, fear and hostility about female beauty? The legacy of Pandora as far as I can see. **Men are captured and intimidated by the myth of the empty, deceitful, beautiful maiden who brings all kinds of troubles into the world. This is a power-over story that begins with Zeus's power over men, and ends with men's power over female beauty and the female body.**

To uncover the Pandora story in contemporary life means to become alert to the ways it still captures us -- and to step outside the double bind of female beauty. Female beauty does not equal power. Female beauty means control and subjugation of the female body, control by men and culturally-imposed standards. **As the Pandora story implies, this myth of female beauty leaves little freedom for men. It is a story about the curse Zeus created to punish men. The curse is a beautiful but deceitful and empty maiden.** This is an image that brings much sorrow and trouble to men as well as to women.

What is beauty then? As I said earlier, beauty is a condition that lives mostly in the eye of the beholder. No single standard for beauty reigns among people everywhere. **There is no archetype of personal beauty.** Also, and you may have noticed this, our perceptions are colored by our emotions so that at one moment your lover may look beautiful (when you're feeling joyful, nurturing, content) and at another she

or he may look dreadful (when you're feeling angry, resentful, afraid) or even boring (when you're feeling bored). Cultures set standards for beauty that reflect the ways in which people are to specialize and fill roles, particularly in reproduction.

Our society has been undergoing changes in regard to female roles and meaning over the past two decades. The beauty myth has not changed along with other cultural forms. **Adolescent girls are still introduced to their own sexuality in terms of how they should look. They are encouraged to be the "objects of desire" instead of agents of their own pleasures and desires.** Young women feel a sense of control by controlling their appearance and weight. In order to feel sexual they try to look sexy. Naomi Wolf (1991) emphasizes the effects of TV and advertisements in this socialization process:

Girls learn to watch their sex along with the boys; that takes up the space that should be devoted to finding out about what they are wanting, and reading and writing about it, seeking it and getting it. Sex is held hostage by beauty and its ransom terms are engraved in girls' minds early and deeply. (p. 157)

**The only way to step outside this process is first to recognize its nature -- that it's a double bind -- and then to disengage from it. Once this is accomplished, the myth becomes a metaphor, and Pandora becomes a metaphor of female oppression through beauty.**

### **Living Myths and Metaphors**

In working with people in psychotherapy, as individuals or couples, **I have the task of revealing the myths they live by. I help them to make conscious the assumptions that have been taken to be "reality." Of course, many of these myths are unwritten rules and unspoken fantasies from their families of origin.** As Carl Jung put it, we are all destined to live out the unlived lives of our parents, the fears and fantasies that they projected into us. If we take these to be reality, then we are living within them, unaware of their consequences. Like all mythologies, our family myths have archetypal cores that evoke particular emotions when certain things happen. For instance, if you grew up with a mother who desperately wanted a life as a musician or the career of a lawyer, but did not live out this desire, you may find yourself filled with joy and motivation to play Bach or write constitutional law -- quite apart from your talents or even your interests. If someone asks innocently "Why do you want to do that?" you will answer "Doesn't everyone want to do that? Isn't it just natural?".

It's the same thing with the Pandora myth or the myth of scientific realism, although these are broad cultural myths rather than unique family myths. People living in these myths feel like they are doing what's natural, merely being realistic. When I work in therapy with women who are bulimic or anorexic they cannot imagine anyone not caring about body weight or slenderness. Isn't it just natural to want to be thin? they say.

Obviously we all need living myths. We need them to translate our emotions into meaning, especially the bigger meanings of life. All societies use mythology to promote certain ways of living and certain principles of behavior. Underlying these myths are the archetypes of universal emotions and images. **Myths become troublesome when they interfere with emotional development,** when they bind us to childish fears and fantasies, **when they prevent us from being in touch with our own desires and motivations.** Such myths form the dramas of psychopathology, the ways in which we suffer unnecessarily from our own images and emotions.

Most of my work in psychotherapy is confronting and analyzing harmful myths, like the Pandora story, that are the bases of suffering. This is not an easy task because **people cannot let go of a myth without having something to replace the lost reality. With most people, I work to replace concrete belief with self-awareness that allows them to see their myths in terms of metaphors rather than reality.** This kind of awareness provides a "space" or perspective that encourages us to examine our beliefs from several angles. We come to recognize that our sense of what's real depends on seeing things in a particular way, and that seeing things is always colored by emotions.

**When a person recognizes deeply the patterns of image and emotion that have shaped her or his reality, that person can begin to see reality differently.** Now it does not seem "just natural" but "as if" it were the case. If you penetrate the Pandora myth and discover the double bind, you no longer feel that female beauty means power, freedom or control. You will feel instead that being beautiful (if you are a woman) or having a beautiful woman as your partner (if you are a man) feels as if it is powerful. A beautiful woman is a metaphor, in our culture, for certain kinds of power, but that power also has other meanings and consequences. Once you step outside of the double bind of female beauty and see Pandora as a metaphor for woman's place in society, you can decide whether or not you want to hold onto a belief that female beauty is important to you. A thirty-year old man that I see in therapy knows that a beautiful woman will not enhance his power nor substitute for accomplishments, but he still wants to have a beautiful woman for a partner because he chooses to feel this is important. He has had the possibility of relationships with a number of attractive and intelligent women, and he has decided on the most beautiful because the symbol of her appearance still means something to him. Mostly he likes to know that he "can attract and keep" such a beautiful woman. Although he acts as if her beauty matters a lot to him, he is also prepared to let go of this as his partner ages, and to commit himself to her person rather than her appearance. He is seeing female beauty as a metaphor of male power rather than a myth of male power.

When we recognize that our most cherished beliefs and desires rest on seeing certain things as if they were true, we are also open to other meanings. We can hold open a space, what psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott called a "play space" within our imagination. In that play space we can entertain other meanings for these beliefs and desires and see the consequences of playing out one meaning or another. This capacity gives us greater freedom, based on self-awareness, than we have if we live simply within a myth and assume that it is reality. At the same time, ancient myths that are no longer living among us -- myths of powerful gods and magical kings, for example -- can now be used as metaphors to explore our own emotional states. Sometimes you may feel a surge of Hera-like jealousy or the imperial certainty of Zeus, to use a couple of examples from Greek mythology. When we are not living within myths, their images provide illumination of our emotional experiences.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I hope you've gotten a glimpse of why I consider the study and understanding of archetypal images to be important in the post-modern world. I also hope that you are worried, if you weren't already, about how we treat the topic of human universals in this period of time. If we discount emotions, the constraints of the human body and life cycle, and the worldwide configurations of human relationships, then we will end up with a conviction that we are isolated individuals, difficult to understand or even profoundly unknowable.

I'm completely in favor of our current focus on human differences of gender, race, privilege, and ethnicity. We are trying to free ourselves from the old myths of dominance-submission that hold us within the binds of wanting power over each other and the natural environment. In the midst of this focus, though, we need to hold onto the thread of our common psychology. If we can study mythology and human development in the context of human emotions and their attendant images, we will find new insights into human difference as well. We need to break down the living myths that oppress us with themes of dominance and submission, as the Pandora myth does. When we see these myths as metaphors, we see ourselves in a new light. Some of that light is shed from the knowledge of what is common, shared and unchangeable in human life. Constantly rediscovering the line between the changeable and the unchangeable is what enlivens the work of a post-modern Jungian analyst.

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