

**Shrink Rap Radio #315, July 27, 2012**

**“Sexuality and The Religious Imagination.”**

**Dr. David Van Nuys Ph.D., aka ‘Dr. Dave’ interviews Dr. Bradley TePaske**  
(Transcribed from <http://www.shrinkrapradio.com> by Gloria Oelman)

**Introduction:**

**Dr. Dave:** My guest today is clinical psychologist and Jungian analyst Dr. Brad TePaske and we’ll be discussing the relationship between religious imagination and sexuality.

Dr. Bradley TePaske received his Diploma in Analytical Psychology from the C.G. Jung Institute for Analytical Psychology in Zurich, Switzerland in 1982 and an American PhD in Depth Psychology from the Union Institute of Cincinnati in 1987. Prior to this calling, he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Printmaking from the University of Massachusetts where he also studied Art History.

He’s been a Jungian analyst and clinical psychologist in private practice for over 25 years in Minnesota, New Mexico and California. He’s the author of four Jungian books, including his latest, which is *Sexuality and the Religious Imagination*.

Now, here's the interview.

**Dr. Dave:** Dr Bradley TePaske, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**Bradley TePaske:** Hello, thank you for the invitation.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, it's good to have you on the show. As you know, I had the privilege of having your wife, Dr. Arlene Landau, on the show speaking about her book on tragic beauty and the Aphrodite complex.

**Bradley TePaske:** Uh, huh. Well I owe you both a debt for getting me on. She encouraged me to call and contact you myself. It's a great book of hers.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, what a dynamic duo you two make – both psychologists, both Jungian analysts and both authors.

**Bradley TePaske:** Ah, yes. Right, we've worked together on a lot of things and bounced a lot of the ideas off one another.

**Dr. Dave:** Well that's great, that's the true test of a marriage I think.

**Bradley TePaske:** Uh, huh.

**Dr. Dave:** I gather you were an artist before you were either a psychologist or an analyst. Tell us a little bit about that.

**Bradley TePaske:** All right. I started drawing when I was a kid, it was basically off Audubon – John James Audubon. I did lots of bird pictures and stuff but I had started college wanting to major in art or in psychology or in English literature. I hated my first psychology course. I realized that Audubon was not a scientist but basically an artist. So little by little I ended up in art school and my interest in 19th century symbolist painting and even more elaborately, in northern renaissance painting – Hieronymus Bosch, Albrecht Dürer, Hans Memling – that whole group of people and the symbolism of their art was really key to the whole drift that I took and then reading surrealism and then got interested in psychoanalysis and Jung and finally had a personal situation where I needed to get psychological after being so aesthetic and artistically preoccupied in man.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. Well it's interesting that we were both turned off by our first psychology course. Amazing that we both ended up here despite that.

**Bradley TePaske:** Well particularly young people go to college and they want to go to see and draw and they're getting used to being away from home in a dorm and all that – socializing and looking for something to put their life together and what do they get? They get axons, dendrons, dendrites and statistics.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, and for me rat running – rat psychology initially.

**Bradley TePaske:** Right.

**Dr. Dave:** So, I gather it was your art that led you into an interest in the Jungian approach. How did you get the call to set out on the rather arduous journey of becoming a Jungian analyst?

**Bradley TePaske:** Let's see. I was an art student at the university of Iowa. That's actually kind of an interesting story – and I had – right from a dream – I had been working on an extremely elaborate large line etching with the title called *The Chariot of Fate Sublimely*. Little did I know that I was riding it even as I made a picture of it and it was at a time leading up to a real personal crisis that really reoriented me in Jung... in terms that at the time when I read *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, were very reminiscent of what he'd gone through in his confrontation with the unconscious and I had been working on this etching very, very intensively and it features a chariot made out of the bones of the dead and a death figure cracking a whip over a fleeting sort of a bird creature carrying the whole thing along. It's very medieval and wild and frightening looking and I had sent a state of that – that's the nice thing about etching you can stop and take a print of your plate or whatever and then draw on it and continue like that – and I'd sent a state of a print to a brother of mine in Boston who marked one page of a book called *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* by C.G. Jung and sent it back to me and said 'I got the print, take a look at this, it's quite remarkable' and the point that he had marked in C.G. Jung's book was a statement where Jung kills Siegfried – it's a famous line for Jungians who've studied him – and it says '...and then in the first rays of the morning sun, a chariot made of the bones of the dead came clattering down a hill...' and Jung draws aim on him and fires and shoots him dead.

**Dr. Dave:** Hmmm. Wow.

**Bradley TePaske:** For me that was a little bit like my experience of... experiencing that from outside was very reminiscent for me of when Jung was really in the thick of dealing with his unconscious and started two mandalas of cities from the air and got the contact on *The Secret of the Golden Flower* from an Eastern scholar that really clicked and confirmed that what he was delving into and finding in the, at times very disturbing, depths of himself had some external and cross cultural referent. And it was out of that that I moved on then to... I managed to finish my MFA at the University of Massachusetts but I was busy reading Jung and Von Franz and Erich Neumann and Sir James George Frazer and I started doing analysis in Boston which was... I had moved by then. So that was kind of the whole matrix and mass that the idea came from.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**Bradley TePaske:** But it was a real true creative transitional crisis and I've been in depth psychology for a long time since then, now.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, and you were kind enough to send me a copy of your 2008 book *Sexuality and the Religious Imagination*, which I gather is the culmination of 20 years of research and I imagine, travel.

**Bradley TePaske:** Right. Yes and on the cover of that book I'll now mention, since you've asked about my art background, Nancy Cater who was gracious enough to publish the book also said that I could do the cover for it, so that collage on the cover is something of my work too.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, I wondered about that because I looked at the cover and I didn't see you as getting the credit for the cover.

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, it's in there, somewhere inside somewhere.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, good.

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, that was originally the idea. I'd been to Zurich and done my training there and as a trainee at the C.G. Jung Institute of Zurich from 1978-82, I had written a diploma thesis there called *Rape and Ritual: A Psychological Study* and it was just about the rape theme in men's dreams. It was kind of the first depth psychological book that really looked at rape as the male problem it most essentially is and so a lot of the ideas stirred up in that turned into this work *Sexuality and the Religious Imagination* which was the theme of my dissertation for a Jungian American PhD with the Jungian Institute in Cincinnati.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm

**Bradley TePaske:** And so all those themes from the earlier work were really very nicely carried through in this second – what I think of as my main, my real contribution.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, well let's talk about some of the main topics in your book which... and the book, by the way, I found to be a very challenging read, a kind of extended archetypal, mythological, historical meditation on sexuality and the religious imagination.

**Bradley TePaske:** That is well put but I'm afraid it is that intricate, or it is that, you know, spread... convoluted. Or not convoluted, it's clear but that broad arrangement of topics.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, it really stretched me. It's very erudite and I found myself needing to turn to the dictionary every now and then. Now, first of all, what do you mean by the term 'the religious imagination?'

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, I was thinking about the specific title. I didn't want to write a book about called 'Sex and Psyche' or 'Sacred Sexuality' or something like that. Those titles hadn't... I really wanted 'imagination' to be foremost so it's *Sexuality and the Religious Imagination* – really emphasizing that last word – and I just... sexuality refers to just sex as it is actually lived by persons and experienced by them and I was just always interested... in fact, I state in the beginning of the book, a couple of the key questions that I started out with the book that I could just share here as I turn to them. First of all I did come from a religious tradition that was tremendously split, a Calvinist background, where the spirit and God were all up above the world somewhere and the rest of us are down here with secular real estate phenomenon and so I use in starting out, the expression birth, sex, death equation, just that whole dynamism of the Great Mother's realm, the biological realm and talk about my first question that started this book this way 'with the biological rhythm of birth, sex, death, so fundamental to our very existence on this plane of becoming, with body and biosphere so palpably the medium of spirit and both sex and the dichotomy of gender utterly pervasive in human imagination, how can it possibly be that the numinosity and sacral significance of sex, has been officially ignored through 2000 years of Christian tradition? This is the germinal study, or question, of this study.'

**Dr. Dave:** Yes and in fact I had highlighted that very section too. I thought that was really a nice statement for the mission that you had set for yourself. So back to my original question about the religious imagination, I refer... I'm guessing that that refers to the stories that we make up to account for where we came from and why we're here and where it's all going?

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, I think that's one step in that direction but the thing that I try to penetrate through to is the stories that we tell ourselves that can be secondary elaborations of all sorts, you know, that's turned into the arts in a hurry but I'm just thinking about the experiences – the nature of experience that people have before... I'm really interested in the book, in various places zero in on, for instance, the overlap between creation mythology and the imagery that one finds in the crucial turns in the individuation process. That before all the stories are made up, people have immediate experiences and the psyche dishes out for us the raw materials of that upon which we build.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. At first blush, sexuality and religious imagination seem like strange bedfellows, if you'll pardon the puns.

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, sure. There's a quote from Jung that I use to introduce chapter one, where he says: 'for anyone acquainted with religious phenomenology, it's an open secret that although physical and spiritual passions are deadly enemies, they're nevertheless brothers-in-arms for which reason it often needs merely a touch to convert one into the other.'

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, yes.

**Bradley TePaske:** If you think about because like ritual behavior and sexual behavior they both tend to be... we tend to act them out, or are inclined towards acting them out ritually and both seem to hold the promise of finding the fullness of life, or the integrated wholeness that so many of us hunger for but there's a real ritual inclination in each of them and one that's integrative, or has a whiff of wholeness, to keep us focused on them.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you know this might be bringing it down too close to earth here but...

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, that's probably good.

**Dr. Dave:** I remember in my first sexual experience... and I grew up in the Calvinist tradition as well...

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, you're a Dutchman – Van Nuys?

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, distantly

**Bradley TePaske:** O.K. TePaske's a Dutch man. I'm just playing there. Go on.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, and so did the young woman who I was consorting with for a sexual experience and so there was um... she struggled with massive guilt afterwards but my sort of direct, immediate experience was 'Wow!' It was a religious experience for me, I guess I have to say and I felt that 'wow, if this isn't part of... you know, if this is a sin, I can't hold with that religion,' you know.

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, right, yeah, those similar conclusions were at the roots of my doing this writing but that is the whole idea... and the whole idea of 'what about the soul stuff of romantic love?' I mean, for instance, that's been in our history... Plato, for instance, in his lovely little book *The Symposium* talks about there, in a gay context, about the beautiful young man and the beauty of the beloved, is a stepping off point for questions about immortality, about joy, about beauty, about the religious experience and it's something that is just cruelly dealt with in Christianity.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you use that phrase 'the soul stuff of sex' in the book and I highlighted that as something that I wanted to ask you about, as I wasn't quite sure, you know, I thought 'O.K. there's probably a whole lot of ideas packed into that little four word phrase – the soul stuff of sex.'

**Bradley TePaske:** Which particular 'soul stuff of sex?' I have a... please repeat it.

**Dr. Dave:** It's somewhere in the first chapter I didn't mark the page number but somewhere in the first chapter you refer to 'the soul stuff of sex.'

**Bradley TePaske:** Yes, O.K. I'm sorry I had a little bubble (?) back there. I have a quote with which the book begins, I think Dave, that speaks to that really, really nicely, because the book... from a religious perspective personally and looking at what I've been involved with in research and experience over recent years, it really does go to a place of Gnosticism – pagan and then Christian Gnosticism is really my cup of tea – that war.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, we're gonna get on to that.

**Bradley TePaske:** And there's a very famous poem in the Nag Hammadi library called *The Thunder, Perfect Mind*. It's the only poetic work there where a woman's voice – she says that she's Eve, or it's assumed she's Eve, but Eve is in that level of things interweaves with the whole greater feminine phenomenon called Sophia – the feminine personification of wisdom in Gnosticism and in that poem, there was from the very beginning when I was writing this book for my doctoral dissertation years ago, I knew that I wanted to have the following words as a front piece, which comes right from that poem and it really says something about the soul stuff of sex. She says (the voice): 'For many are the pleasant forms which exist in numerous sins and incontinencies and disgraceful passions and fleeting pleasures which men embrace until they become sober and go up to the resting place and they will find me there and they will live and they will not die again.' That's the feminine words from about 2000 years ago.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. So what do you make of that?

**Bradley TePaske:** What do I make of that? The key thing is 'For many are the pleasant forms which exist in numerous sins, incontinencies etc.,' because one of the distinctions that I try to make very strongly early in the book is that we can look at the pattern of different archetypes influencing different kinds of human behaviors around us all the time you know like Pan, the rapist, bursting out of somebody, Aphrodite in some girl lost to the escort business, Dionysus in the frolicking and partying of our lives but what we're really looking for in this book and in depth psychologically, is to see what the imagery is and where the imagery of sexuality takes one in the imagination and I think it goes down a long hallway with the dark and light that leads to... well, the whole question of what is the meaningfulness or dynamism, or what's the play of gender in instinct, in behavior and in the flow of imagery within us? What is that really trying to lead us to and if you're looking holistically and in an all embracing way, i.e. under the rubric of a religious perspective, that's something that needs to be looked at with great care and specificity and differentiation, whereas for instance in great contrast the great example I use is the way, for instance, of St Paul, splits spirit from the body and then goes on to speak in the most defiling and disparaging terms of body and sexuality.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. Building on what you're just saying, you suggest that it's important to engage in psychological reflection on the sexual instinct or it will manifest automatically in symptom or behavior. It kind of reminds me of Freud – the

idea that if we don't deal with unconscious issues that they're going to manifest themselves automatically in symptom or behavior.

**Bradley TePaske:** I think that's certainly a principle that Jung and Freud held in common and that's why, you know, situations that drive people into Jungian analysis, or psychoanalysis or whatever, you know, are oftentimes things that are tremendous tangles in relational situations, or in sexual situations. It's not infrequent at all.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. One of the terms that I had to look up that you use quite a bit is the concept of syzygy or the complementary and necessary pairs of opposites and that runs through your discussion. Tell us a little bit about syzygy.

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah. Syzygy – it's such an odd, wonderful word. It refers to two things, as you said, two things being yoked together and that's my way of talking about... First of all I might say, when Jung first talked about the anima and animus, he talked about men have a relationship with the anima, women have a relationship on the inside with the animus and that was his original kind of strict symmetry. The reason that I talk about anima and animus together in the syzygy context, is because I kind of, like other Jungians like Edward Whitmont, like James Hillman, various others, have really come to look at the anima and animus as archetypes that either gender will have some relationship with and so I do that to tear it out of the old context and just talk about the syzygy as the dynamic play of masculine and feminine in the psyche of man or woman or whatever on the GBLT spectrum that we live with now and are more aware of than ever.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, that's interesting to me to learn that because I had come to a similar conclusion but not based on any particular reading, so I'm glad to hear that in fact it's got some basis beyond my own head. Now you talk about the major coniunctio and the minor coniunctio and I couldn't find that passage again but there was a really nice way that you kind of laid out a sort of a top tier pairing and then a lower tier pairing beneath that.

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, I think that I speak of that in really quite general terms that say, you know, two people are in together, in a couple, man and woman and, you know, the upper coniunctio is all they know of one another consciously. All they see and are aware of are all the day to day goings on, the story of their relationship, the stories they tell themselves about it and yet in dreams there's often like a deeper representation of a coupling that... Edward Edinger and somewhere, Jung, talks about this also... that it's really like the dynamism that goes along between the unconscious parts of those two persons, the unconscious line of the interaction, that goes on sort of beneath the surface and that brings up all these surprising, startling, wonderful, or disruptive things that come out of love relationship and the thing that really drives the individuation process or the progressive individuation qualities or mutually differentiating qualities of a marital interaction. You know, from really deeper in us than we're aware of at any given moment.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I think the passage I was reaching for was at a different level and it seemed like the devil was in there as part of the lower coniunctio or...

**Bradley TePaske:** Well, there's several passages early in the book where I talk in that, with that kind of historical language, for instance the... and it's something that I want to just touch on lightly here, because I was just really talking about the deeper dynamism as I just described between masculine and feminine inside and the devil is one classic image of... in fact the devil as he's portrayed for us so often, is kind of most resembling of Pan but he really is a kind of devolved figure who carries a whole range of imagery from our polytheistic past. I remember once without even trying to, I got out any book that I had that was on the devil, or witchcraft, or the occult, or whatever – art books – and I went through this long, long series and just looked at what was the imagery of the devil and you could see that some places he has a trident like Poseidon, other places he has this wizened face and a little beard like Charon, who carries people across to, souls across to, Hades. Elsewhere he looks like Pan, sometimes he has wings on his feet or his back like Hermes. He's really a whole amalgam of what was once flushed, filled out in the whole plethora of sexual gods in Greek or Roman tradition for instance but then comes down to us just as this little kind of banal clump of evil, you know.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, yeah.

**Bradley TePaske:** And that's a good example of the kind of differentiating where you just have, like a rapist, shows up in dream, or a horrible assailant, or just a startling dark figure out of the woods or something, that you can start to begin to contemplate that image, see how other things appear in a stream of ensuing dreams, or fantasy, or active imagination and start to get a much... and engage in our own process of active imagination, reflection and differentiate that figure. It's sort of like taking the poor, pathetic devil of Christianity, banalised beyond all endurance and to find out what kind of antique glimmer and spark of life is still hiding in him.

**Dr. Dave:** (Laughter). Here's a passage that I think relates to what you're just saying. You write: 'What remains crucial to the entire process of psychological individuation is a progressive differentiation of masculine and feminine psychic elements through the life long trials of love. Sex and religion, each with it's illusive promise that what has been cut asunder, may be bound together again.'

**Bradley TePaske:** Right, right, that sits there very nicely. I have one chapter that was an interesting one. That (was) one of the ones that ended up to be one of the shortest chapters in the book but one of the ones that I spent the most time researching on the mediaeval sexual heresies.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, I thought that was a very interesting chapter.

**Bradley TePaske:** I think I was attracted to reading all that because of listening to people argue endlessly about reform church doctrine when I grew up.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh.

**Bradley TePaske:** And always finding a way to find them wrong or whatever but there's a great little example there of where Goethe writes about his character Faust being taken off to Greece by Mephistopheles and Mephistopheles – who is actually and of course, the Christian devil – he has the hardest time having an imagination and

an ability to accept what he sees around him in antique lands and pre-Christian lands of old. And the devil himself, in his perplexity, ends up saying 'Now as I wandered through fields of flame, I'd much to vex me, much to disconcert. Naked lot, just here and there a skirt. The sphinx is brazen, the griffins without shame, this crowd of creatures winged and tress displays, no end of back and front views to the gaze but we lewded (?) heart can relish the salacious but this antique is too life like and vivacious.' And he continues to say 'I never saw much value in these Greeks, their sense of senses set the senses free in dazzling freaks. The sins, they lure men to him light and spark, while ours are sombre and always in the dark.' That could be a Calvinist or a Catholic remark.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I remember reading that passage and it is very striking. In fact clearly a lot of our sex/religion split can be traced to Christianity but you also point out that patriarchal ideas predate Christianity.

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, that's one of the most germinal writers and germinal ideas that came from... I ran into, in doing the deconstruction of patriarchy and patriarchal sexual purviews, was by a writer named Verne Bullough, who was a historian of sexuality, passed away just a couple of years ago and this... it's a really crucial idea that I think your listeners would really be fascinated with, where he says, and I'll quote just one little passage here. 'In some' Bullough says 'western tradition as established in the ancient Near East was a mixed one...' and this truly answers your question Dave, 'but increasingly it came to be more restrictive...' and this is the punchline... 'more hostile to all forms of sex, not leading to procreation. With the Persians...' it goes on from there to give various examples but that whole idea of the patriarchy is so externalized in its ordinances and rules and in the structure of that archetype that it tends to collectivize and externalize everything and not worry about the individual soul. You need a solid platform to administer it and so by excluding sexuality it becomes illegitimate, moralized, rejected, undisciplined and gives you a real loss of soul stuff in the whole process if you demonize it, that's a classic split in patriarchy's attitude towards sexuality. More interestingly is what Bullough gets around to saying about how besides any variation in religious belief, in the mid legal period, was also thought to be a variation in gender inclination. It's a very interesting thing where he talks about the shifting of that... like gay people, any kind of pleasure, love, any kind of pedagogical love or whatever, you know, becomes suspect under that aegis of patriarchy and that of course works to darken and demonize whole elements of our human nature that we struggle with.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, so lot of your book is looking at patriarchy and the negative effects of patriarchy and it caused me to wonder if there might be a different set of problems if say we'd had 2000 years of matriarchy. What do you think about that?

**Bradley TePaske:** I don't really have anything to say about matriarchy because there's never been one. You know, I mean that's a very, very big thing in the direction of feminists at one time. That was a hot topic but I don't know of when there has been a functioning matriarchy. There's been books speculating that way but I've talked that over with the professor emeritus of my... who I knew at the University of UCSB in Santa Barbara and he says just there's no historical record and I've always trusted him because I've known there are many other books have tried to create one.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. well we'll that one lie there then.

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, and it doesn't keep me from being a devotee... and if I was going to be candid, it doesn't keep me personally from being outspoken as an unequivocal devotee of the Great Goddess.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K.

**Bradley TePaske:** That's where I am and am coming from but as far as the idea of a historical matriarchy it just doesn't seem to hold.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. We use the expression 'free spirit' these days to refer to people with a Bohemian lifestyle I had no idea that the term 'free spirit' actually goes back to medieval times and was associated with certain excesses that we find in society still today.

**Bradley TePaske:** Uh, huh. Oh, yeah, like the famous Brethren of the Free Spirit.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. You talk about in Germany...

**Bradley TePaske:** 12<sup>th</sup> into the 13<sup>th</sup> century. They're a real interesting bunch.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, tell us about that, those folks.

**Bradley TePaske:** They had a kind of quasi-sacramental sexuality. First of all, they were in a milieu where there was many, many expectations of the outpouring of the holy spirit was at hand. It was a kind of millennialist fervor that stirred through those centuries, especially after the 12<sup>th</sup> century. A real important source for me on that was this wonderful writer named Norman Cohn and his classic work *The Pursuit of the Millenium* which is where I got a lot of information about that and read all the auxiliary sources but the Brethren of the Free Spirit they were like a non-sanctioned, non-canonical order of, more or less Gnostic, elite persons. They thought of themselves as chosen and it gets to be that ambiguity between like a highly refined psychopath and somebody who's really in a spiritual quest that claim that they really believe all this. Tremendous psychic inflation, that they were given to. These were people that often generated out of disenfranchised populations on the Rhineland and Northern Italy, in Southern France or whatever, who travelling in difficult economic circumstances, outside the church and not rooted in community, would tend to organize themselves in that way and have the notion that the elect would engage in sexuality on purpose, because it was a transgression against the Catholic Church and because it was thought of as a sacramental marrying among souls. They were wandering persons up and down the Rhineland, particularly in Holland and Belgium.

**Dr. Dave:** I got the impression from what I read in your book that these were people who were very much on the spirit side of, sort of, I guess, the mind-body split.

**Bradley TePaske:** Alright, yeah. If we take that old thing of spirit, soul and body they were really inclined toward... they were the spiritual ones.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, so they were into, you know, kind of the whole mortification of the body and rejection of sexuality but certain ones, as you point out, became so inflated that they were above all... they sort of came full circle to be 'well, we're so far above this that we can have orgies.'

**Bradley TePaske:** That's... you really get the main point there because they were just in such... to be so inflated was also to be in a point of extreme ambivalence and so the conclusions are for a Gnostics – groups going all the way back – were people who were intent on immediate direct experience of the spiritual world to go... there's two conclusions, one can be a mad asceticism, or the other one can be a just a world... like a self-destructive libertine.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, and it put me in mind of, you know, of things that happen today with – we hear about evangelists, or even Buddhist leaders, who end up becoming libertines, if you will, in shocking ways. And it seems like, O.K., this has been going on for a long time, that people who profess total identification with the spirit, well, the other side comes around to bite them.

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh right. Yeah, like the person flagellating themselves to humiliate his flesh, ends up having a paroxysm of pain, or orgasm, that then is taken... or goes into a state that is characteristic of a lot of saints. You know, to abuse the body to the point where it manifests itself very intensely.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, and while we're still in that medieval period you talk about what you refer to as the witch craze that became rampant during the middle ages. Tell us a bit about that and how that fits in with your basic argument.

**Bradley TePaske:** Well, I mean that was... so much of the persecution of witches is just the pervasive, absolutely built-in, hatred of the feminine upon which patriarchy is erected, or be controlling of the feminine and I think there's enormous... there's evidence... suggestion that a great number of the persecution of witches, so-called, were from, they were from alternate religious orders, or they were practitioners of home births, midwives, herbalists, etc. etc., that was one feature of who would be mistreated or persecuted but I think it was really pervasively just an attitude towards just the... that's a typical thing of patriarchy, is that it's big secret is that it's resting upon the deep feminine that it always has to be wary of.

**Dr. Dave:** So, it's denying this feminine and to keep that denial in place, to reinforce it, they end up persecuting the feminine?

**Bradley TePaske:** Yes, yes. And the wonderful thing that I was pleased to juxtapose with the talk upon patriarchy and I did do a lot of work on St Paul – taking a legacy through a Catholic trajectory – St Paul and St Augustine probably played as lethal a role in darkening and demonizing sexuality as anyone but I lost my train there.... Oh, wait but the thing that I wanted to include was from a statement that you find in some of the deeper more archaic stories about the feminine – the triple goddess in Greece – and there's one very interesting where the triple goddess of fate, who comes in three forms, is someone who is said to be a figure of whom even Zeus stands in awe.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Bradley TePaske:** And I think that betrays a general thing about patriarchy that there it is, established in trying to keep control – it can control human lives but that the big secret is, that fate is still more powerful than patriarchy.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. Just stepping aside just a little bit here, I know that you've been influenced considerably by James Hillman.

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, indeed, yeah. I miss him very much right now.

**Dr. Dave:** How does his reintroduction of the notion of, quotes, 'gods,' as opposed to archetypes and complexes, advance the Jungian conversation?

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, that's a very good one. I think it advances the whole psychoanalytic conversation and I can give you a real nice example that also ties in with... here, I had that one marked 'cause I wanted to make sure that we included it if you asked me about Jim. For instance, just think of this monolith, this thing the phallus and how that figured in Freud's psychology?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Bradley TePaske:** And then, of course, how literally that is taken – you know, penis as phallus and Jung of course brought in a much more symbolic attitude toward the phallus particularly, I think, based on a dream he had where he saw an underground phallus as a young man in a little chapel beneath the earth?

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Bradley TePaske:** It's a famous anecdote in Jung's life – and saw that it was this huge, tall thing. He experienced it as god-like power with a big eye looking at him. It was his initiation, I guess you could say, of a kind of Priapus, or the strictly phallic God, as a child but one thing that specifically speaks to that is in Hillman's book *The Myth of Analysis* which is a marvelous classic work of his, he makes the following statement where he first of all talks about... and this is after talking about how, instead of what he calls the penis-phallus ambiguity has been... is not ever going to be solved because, of course, a penis is an anatomical organ and phallus is something that ultimately knows no gender – it's the image of masculine creative power in the psyche, or in a ritual context, or religious context. But to really go in all the way with that, Hillman speaks of how the, how... and I quote him here from in *The Myth of Analysis*, 'sexuality changes as the gods who carry it's token, the phallus-penis, change through life's phases' and he goes on to say – and this gave me a lot of homework actually – because he goes on to say: 'Pan, Priapus, Hermes, Dionysus, Zeus, Apollo, Euros, Takuri (?), Kabiri (?), Salome, ?, ?', each represents a fantasy pattern through which the instinct can be experienced.' Now if you start with Freud's penis, or penis-phallus, or Jung's underground phallus and the symbolic things that he brought to bear in considering it and then get to this, that's, I think, a pretty good reflection of the kind of differentiation that is required and that Freud, Jung and Jim Hillman are guides to.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, so...

**Bradley TePaske:** Very differentiated, you know. O.K. it's a phallus, in a dream, for instance, when you stay with the absolute presented particulars of a dream and don't allow somebody to just generalize – 'Oh, it looks like just a penis. Oh, it's a...' It's here – is it an assailant, is it a lover, is it an androgynous figure – stay with the particulars of a presented pattern of fantasy and imagery. Anyhow, I'll leave that there 'cause I'll go on for another (unclear).

**Dr. Dave:** O.K., O.K., and yes, I get your answer that what Hillman brings to it is a much more differentiated... ah, that he takes it beyond where it had been to a much more differentiated kind of analysis.

**Bradley TePaske:** Sure. Well, like if I may there just for a moment, just to take that word 'animus.' It's a word that Jungians have had a little problem with because everybody talks about 'oh, the animus,' sort of this interesting, challenging thing but the animus is always a problem, you know, and it's defined so minimally, actually, in a way and if you go from the thing called 'animus' and you just talk about masculine imagery and multiple different, the just so of the presentation in an individual's dream, or the phallic imagery as it is presented in a much more differentiated way, like Jim Hillman is suggesting, then you start to see what a breath of fresh air and imaginal openness and etc., and a shift from psychological theory to phenomenological appreciation, even aesthetic appreciation, that you find with the greater differentiation – just a notion like phallus.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K. You know some portion of my audience actually are therapists and...

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, I think there's a number of them.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah and students in training to be therapists, so I wonder if you can think about the clinical implications, you know, for somebody who is a therapist, thinking of being a therapist, studying to be a therapist. What have your studies in relation to sexuality and the religious imagination – what are the implications for therapy?

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, my goodness, I think... that's a large question. The implications for therapy, as I know it and therapies with, you know, grief therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, recovery kinds of methods etc., clinically descriptive sorts of things. I find them, that they... to say it this way – they all need to be complemented by a psychology that is not trying to be a science but that is at ease with the idea of being nestled deeply and profoundly in mythology or, more specifically, in a mythopoetic basis of mind.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Bradley TePaske:** Because I think of profession... I'm glad that there's the expression 'the behavioral sciences' because psychology could then... psyche and logos – the meaningfulness of the soul – can kind of retain it's antique resonance for us – some of it.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm. Hm.

**Bradley TePaske:** But I think that the necessity to approach questions of sexuality in religion in a clinical situation is first of all having to... being able to get, the moral element out of it and to see things phenomenologically instead of judging them in advance.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. Hm. Hm.

**Bradley TePaske:** But with the emphasis on outcome studies and statistics and proof and observables and statistics, there's everything I see in professional psychology seems to be drifting away from the mythopoetic base that one needs to understand sexuality and religion.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes, yes. So would your advice to therapists of all stripes be to immerse themselves in the study of poetry and mythology and so on.

**Bradley TePaske:** Well no, I think you're really in the right direction there to like... I think on the other hand, you know, that when for instance somebody needs to be licensed and recognized collectively as a legitimate practitioner or so, there's all many of these things, and degrees and studies and stuff and particulars, like if your assessing a child for autism or something, that you need to be on top of all that but I would really hope that a part of – and it is, it's exciting to see how many psychologists have other things that they're involved in of the arts, or of their religious practice, their meditation practice, body work, astrology, alchemy, real involvement in ecological considerations and the arts and so I think that to supp... if you're doing a straight program and having to get through that clinical and get through your hours for license and the whole business of professional psychology, the more you can do to nurture your soul outside of the theoretical and scientific box, the better.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah and you know that's actually why a lot of people listen to these interviews.

**Bradley TePaske:** Oh, sure you cover a lot of bases and the breadth of take on things of your guests is terrific.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, that actually is my goal because having gone through the academic mill I know that often it's just very, very narrow and that there's a much broader set of perspectives out there that are all important.

**Bradley TePaske:** Yeah, I had an older colleague that is really essential to my whole progress through the world in Don Sandner. He was a wonderful Jungian psychiatrist up in San Francisco and not long before he died he made the remark that the whole field of professional psychology could be charged with malpractice for cutting off half the universe of experience and refusing to even acknowledge that it's there.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Bradley TePaske:** And that refers to everything that the DSM IV isn't and that was the inner world of image and emotion and affect and numinosity.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. I don't know if you've read her book, I interviewed another Jungian analyst, a younger one, Patricia Damery.

**Bradley TePaske:** I don't know her particularly well just as, you know, just as one of our tribe.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, well, she writes quite a bit about the importance of Don Sandner in her journey. I think he was her analyst for part of her training and so I can refer you to that book and interview after we get off. As we wind down, I wonder are there any final points you wish to make?

**Bradley TePaske:** To gather this all up, I just think the whole purpose of my book was to follow how conflicts had been generated out of my life in answers to questions out of my entire religious background and so I'm just hoping that whoever would read my book it will just serve some real significant purpose in their... in encouragement to go right on into, you know, follow their own exploration on this cutting edge. We're doing sexuality, you know and how that connects with spirit and with imagery and with the aesthetic and the enhancement of life.

**Dr. Dave:** O.K., well that's great. Dr. Bradley TePaske, I want to thank you for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

**Bradley TePaske:** My pleasure. I want to apologize for a couple of times when I just missed words and kind of made this clumsy for a moment here but it went very well and I'm delighted that you asked me.

**Dr. Dave:** I hope you enjoyed this conversation with Dr. Brad TePaske. As you heard me say, and Dr. TePaske confirm, his book is an extended archetypal, mythological, historical meditation on sexuality and the religious imagination. In this relatively brief interview we were only barely able to scratch the surface. For example, he has chapters on Tantra, dreams and Gnosticism that we never got to. This would be a wonderful book for any serious student of Jungian depth psychology, mythology or the history of religious thought. A more casual reader, however, might find it a bit daunting but would undoubtedly come away with an enlarged world view and some provocative new perspectives. Also, I should hasten to add, that not all his examples are historical. His observations include examples from current everyday life in which the archetypes, or, quotes, 'gods' are alive and well, expressing themselves in contemporary forms. If you have any doubts about the syzygy of sexuality and religion, who, in the midst of their lovemaking, has not on occasion cried out, or heard their partner cry out, 'Oh, my God?' Case closed. By the way this trivial observation is my own and not Dr. TePaske's. If you'd like to order Dr. TePaske's book, do be sure to use the Amazon widget in the right hand sidebar of our site at [shrinkrapradio.com](http://shrinkrapradio.com).

**Wrap up:** Thanks to today's guest, Jungian analyst Dr. Brad TePaske for his thought provoking exploration of *Sexuality and the Religious Imagination*.