

**Shrink Rap Radio #83, The Archetype of the Wise Fool, with Clare Morris
David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Clare Morris
(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Erika Steeves)**

Excerpt: *I see the fool as being different from a fool (small “f”) who trivializes life and death. I see the fool as really being the sacred Fool, the holy Fool who is alive in every part of the human being, really working for that human being’s wholeness whether the person knows it or not. And I see the fool as being an image, not the archetype itself, but as an image of the self, the self which is the central archetype as Jung saw it. In every person it is the unique wholeness pattern within every person.*

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest, Dr. Clare Morris. Clare Morris, PhD, is a former high school teacher as well as a former Roman Catholic nun. In 1971, Clare agreed to be the founding coordinator of the Ecumenical Peace Institute of Northern California, which was a chapter of clergy and laity concerned about the war in Vietnam. In 1974, she organized the Angela Center in Santa Rosa, California, whose programs integrated spirituality, social responsibility, psychology, and the arts. After nine years at the Angela Center, Clare left her 25 years with her religious community and returned to school. Subsequently, she earned a second M.A and a PhD in the field of counseling psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. Her dissertation dealt with the archetypal image of the fool as a primary healing factor. Clare is currently a psychotherapist with a Jungian orientation as well as a writer. She’s published two books of poetry, *In Transit: Love Poems to The City* and *Child of the Longest Night*, published by the Angela Center Press. She’s also a contributor to *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace*, which will be edited by Maxine Hong Kingston and published by Koa Books in Hawaii. Now here’s the interview.

Dr. Dave: Dr. Clare Morris, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Dr. Morris: Well thank you. I’m happy to be here.

Dr. Dave: Great! It’s wonderful to have you.

Dr. Morris: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: And I guess we’re going to be talking generally today about the archetype of the Wise Fool, but let’s start off a little bit about your background. I note that you were a Catholic nun for many years.

Dr. Morris: I was. Actually I was born into a Quaker family. So it’s even stranger that I was a Catholic nun for 25 years.

Dr. Dave: So how did that come about then?

Dr. Morris: Oh, well it was the way of the fool showing itself early in my life where what I planned—and certainly did not expect—broke through what I had planned. I fell in love with a Catholic man, and I thought he was perfect except he was Catholic. And

then I investigated Catholicism as a college student, and really fell in love with the church. I fell in love with the artistic, mystical aspects of the church, not the institution.

Dr. Dave: Ahh. Aha.

Dr. Morris: However, the way of giving myself entirely to this that I loved so was to join a monastic community, and that's what I did. It wasn't what he had in mind. (laughs) It certainly wasn't what I had in mind in the beginning either, but you never know.

Dr. Dave: Well, were you then unable to pursue the relationship with him, having done that?

Dr. Morris: Oh yes. Yeah, because it was as monastic community and it involved making vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and certainly not being able to marry. As a matter of fact, I was thinking today of some of the examples of the fool's dance in my own life, and one was on the day of my having made vows, I was in the midst of a very solemn ceremony in Santa Rosa, California, and was lying face down on the floor covered with a black cloth—an image of dying to all that I had known.

Dr. Dave: Mmm-hmm...

Dr. Morris: And my right leg got a cramp in it and so it would not stay down. It protested by rising in the air! There was nothing I could do about it! (laughs) So, yes.

Dr. Dave: Now how old were you when you made that commitment?

Dr. Morris: Well, I entered the community when I was 23. I was baptized a Catholic when I was 19, you know that age of an individual's idealism and desire to give everything for what one has discovered.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Dr. Morris: Yeah, 19.

Dr. Dave: Wow. (laughs)

Dr. Morris: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: So then after 25 years...

Dr. Morris: That's right.

Dr. Dave: ...you left your vocation as a nun.

Dr. Morris: Well I did for the same reason that I went.

Dr. Dave: Tell us about that.

Dr. Morris: Well I went because I wanted to deepen my relationship with the divine, with the great mystery of life and death and rebirth. And I left for the same reason. I found that what the structure in which I wanted this to happen no longer served that. And so I had to leave. That again is the fool's work, I tell you. That's what the fool does; it takes you out of the vessels within which you're becoming good habits, and then the vessels break and you have to go on.

Dr. Dave: Oh my goodness. Well before we go into more depth with the fool, I know that you're a Jungian oriented psychotherapist...

Dr. Morris: Yes I am. Yes.

Dr. Dave: And how did you become involved with Jungian psychology?

Dr. Morris: I became involved because in my work in the religious community of which I was a part, I did much spiritual direction for people who wanted to reflect on their lives of contemplation and how that was expressed in their daily lives. And through that I discovered Jung and his interest in spirituality and his sense that the center of each of us is sacred. That the lives, well that the center is not just a pinpoint or a place, but he quoted Nicolas of Cusa as having said that "God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." And I really related to that and to him and to his knowledge of myths and about the archetypal world. It all made such sense to me. I think the mid-seventies, early seventies, a passion for his work was ignited in me, and in the late seventies I came upon the Guild for Psychological Studies, a group of people who give seminars on spirituality, myth, and the arts, and certainly also the depth psychology of Jung. As a matter of fact, their founders studied with Jung in Zurich in the '60s (late '50s) and were in analysis with Emma Jung and Toni Wolff and Linda Fierz and Gerhard Adler, and the greats who were Jung's students. They had such knowledge and passion for his point of view, and that was contagious. I discovered them in 1978 and felt my whole belief system crack.

Dr. Dave: Wow. You know I think we've traveled in some similar circles. I've heard of the Guild, but never really discovered them. Now I feel like maybe I missed something. Was Joyce Tappan part of that group?

Dr. Morris: Who?

Dr. Dave: Joyce Tappan? Does that name ring a bell?

Dr. Morris: Oh yes! Yes, of course. Yeah.

Dr. Dave: I thought I had heard her mention it because her husband Gordon was a colleague...

Dr. Morris: Gordon, oh yes, of course.

Dr. Dave: And Gordon had a big influence on me in terms of turning me towards and solidifying my interests in Jung.

Dr. Morris: Oh, how interesting. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: Small world.

Dr. Morris: I'm glad to be able to talk to you about that.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. So tell us, then, how you became involved with the archetype of the fool.

Dr. Morris: Well, I see the fool as being different from a fool (small "f") who trivializes life and death. I see the fool as really being the sacred Fool, the holy Fool who is alive in every part of the human being, really working for that human being's wholeness whether the person knows it or not. And I see the fool as being an image, not the archetype itself, but as an image of the self, the self which is the central archetype as Jung saw it. In every person it is the unique wholeness pattern within every person. And the fool is a wonderful human and humanizing image of that wholeness pattern, which, you know, wholeness pattern is rather an abstraction and it's wonderful to have an image of that, that is so alive and joyous and suffering and always working and playing in us, to nudge us onto our true path. And furthermore, to nudge us away from the digressions, the detours from our authentic way as individuals.

Dr. Dave: Ok, now the fool has a certain coloration, right?

Dr. Morris: Oh yes, yeah.

Dr. Dave: So maybe you can describe that to us, how you conceive of the fool in terms of maybe the positive aspects, the negative aspects, the advantages, the pitfalls. It's kind of a mixed bag, isn't it?

Dr. Morris: Oh, absolutely mixed, and is as contradictory as any human being. Is as paradoxical as life itself. And that really is, I think, probably the central word that can be used of the fool as an image. It is paradoxical. You really can't define the fool. If a precise definition appears, one hasn't really understood the fool. So it's paradoxical and would include any paradox you can imagine. Joy, sorrow, birth, death, discovery, loss, creativity, destruction, violence, non-violence, love, indifference...

Dr. Dave: Are you able to talk about the fool in Shakespeare at all? Because that might be a way for people to sort of enter into this world that we're talking about.

Dr. Morris: Yeah, that's a good field for talking about the fool. In fact, images of this image are really important. I'm thinking of the fool in Lear who has such compassion for Lear, and yet whose questions of Lear from the very beginning through Lear's daughter Cordelia and through the figure of Lear's fool. The questions are so precise and poignant, and Lear doesn't hear them until the end of his life, until he has moved through his self-created tragedy. And in effect we can see that he must go that way, that there's no way he can learn who he really is without doing what he does, you know?

Dr. Dave: Yeah. And we talk about the wise fool and Shakespeare does such a good job of portraying that, where the fool has the license. He's the only one who can speak the truth to the king without fear of getting his head lopped off.

Dr. Morris: That's right. And certainly the king doesn't like what the fool says always, but the fool has a role, a boundary, and that I guess allows the king to stay a certain distance away from what the fool suggests. And so maybe consider it at some level that the king would never allow anyone else to see. Every king must have some kind of fool in his or her life. So it makes one wonder about our present kings and what gestures are meaningful in their lives.

Dr. Dave: Are you making a political reference now?

Dr. Morris: I really am. I am but I don't want to go there. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: (laughs) Ok, I just wanted to make sure I was picking up on it.

Dr. Morris: Yeah, who asks the meaningful questions? Probably some candidate, you know? Anyway....

Dr. Dave: Well, even I think of, you know, oh I'm going to block on his name now, the comedian, Jon..., who does the news show. I can't believe I'm blocking on his name, but he does a comedic version of the news, which in fact poses all the right questions, and is one of the best sources really for the news. Jon Stewart is the name I'm blocking out.

Dr. Morris: Uh-huh.

Dr. Dave: A lot of people watch his show to get the news. It's the only palatable way they can get it, is with a dollop of humor.

Dr. Morris: Yeah, it's really important to have those sources. **Jim Hytar 0:17:37** would be another example.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Dr. Morris: Or Harpers does a weekly news summary just of juxtaposing headlines in an apparently random—but it's not really random—fashion. You can subscribe to it on email. You know, it puts comedy and tragedy together, what is petty and what is profound together. It's a wonderful gathering that's quite fool-wise.

Dr. Dave: Now by the way, I know that you're a poet and if at any point any poetry comes to mind that you'd like to throw in here that would help our discussion, please feel free to do so.

Dr. Morris: Oh, ok. I do have one poem that I will share. In fact, I'm walking into the other room to get the book in which it is, because I forgot about that.

Dr. Dave: So the very term "wise-fool" is kind of an oxymoron, isn't it?

Dr. Morris: Yes, but again the fool is essentially paradoxical, so of course they go together.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, it's the two sides tugging against each other.

Dr. Morris: That's right, and the fool is always seeking some kind of apparently impossible balance between any terms of a paradox or a contradiction. So whenever a human being gets into an extreme, the fool will pull out all the stops to pull that person into a more central place. People who work too hard, yeah, lots of people work too hard and what happens? They get sick; they have an accident; they flub up on the very projects that they were working so hard to execute. And it's the fool's doing in a sense.

Dr. Dave: Ok. So what has been the role of the archetype of the fool in your own life?

Dr. Morris: Ah. (laughs) Fortunately—it really is fortunate—I was born with a disability, and that has served me all the way along. I was born with a retina abnormality, which is called cone dystrophy. And I've been legally blind all my life and have never seen color.

Dr. Dave: Hmmmm...

Dr. Morris: So I'm monochromatic in what I see. So I see life through an over-exposed black-and-white out of focus film. That's what it looks like.

Dr. Dave: And how do you even have a concept of color then? When you use the word "color," what does that even mean to you?

Dr. Morris: Well, it means that green evokes a freshness, especially certain shades of green as they're described by other people....

Dr. Dave: Interesting.

Dr. Morris:of new leaves, of vegetables that I really like, the taste of green. It smells like new-mown grass, for example.

Dr. Dave: Ah, so you have a whole cluster of associations that come together....

Dr. Morris: Yes, yes I do....

Dr. Dave: ...and create greenness for you.

Dr. Morris: Yeah, and red. Well, certainly blood is red and I have many emotional and physical responses to blood, as we all do. I'm thinking of a statement of a poet whom I studied in my dissertation. Her name was Sheila Moon and she said, "pain is the most rabidative 0:21:57 colors brightening the world of becoming." So my associations with color are from many, many different sources. And I use color in my own poetry. So it's kind of odd, but I feel color in my body.

Dr. Dave: That's really fascinating. So I had asked you about the role of the archetype of the fool in your own life and that got you talking about disability...

Dr. Morris: Yes, yes. That's right. That's right. Well, so because of my eyesight I've made (laughs) a kind of stream of mistakes....

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Dr. Morris: And I've had to learn to laugh about them and to understand that part of the fool's role is to help us to fail and to get up and risk again. And to stumble and fall, over and over in this process, and about how important that is. So, for example, one time I was in Washington, D.C., and this was while I was a nun, and there was a snowstorm and through the snowstorm I had to go – in order to catch the shuttle bus to Catholic University where I was studying at the time. So I'm overwhelmed by light so I had dark glasses on and was all bundled up and trudged through the snow and climbed onto the bus, and I looked around and I thought, "Something is not right here!" I had climbed into a delivery truck!

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: ...and I looked around and the driver wasn't there (thank god), so I climbed out and the bus was parked right behind the delivery truck and everybody had seen this...

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: (laughs) ...so I got onto the bus and there was this absolute silence. Then a lone voice from about the center of the bus called out, "Something on your mind, sister?"

Dr. Dave: Oh. (laughs)

Dr. Morris: So it's that kind of thing that happens over and over. I remember one time running across a room to – this was at a kind of a large meeting in Rome of sisters from my community – and I ran across the room to hug one of my friends whom I hadn't seen for years and I threw my arms around her and then realized that I was actually hugging the President of the whole community whom I had never met and who didn't know me, and was just shocked at this bird who flew at her, embraced her, and you know she was not amused, which was too bad. It was really too bad. (laughs)

I've climbed in the wrong car and thank goodness the driver was not someone with ill intent. When helping out in various kitchens of our community, I've done all kinds of things. I remember once putting a great dish of mustard into a huge jar of peanut butter because they looked the same to me, but of course, you know, they weren't.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Dr. Morris: All kinds of things happened. It keeps me laughing. You know, I could go on and on with that.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, there is a wonderful quality to your voice and a wonderful kind of laughter that lurks behind your words, and so it sounds like that's part of what the fool has taught you.

Dr. Morris: Oh yes.

Dr. Dave: ...has brought you an ability to laugh at yourself to some degree.

Dr. Morris: And, you know, it's I think a gift that I bring to the clients with whom I work. I really have to laugh at myself sometimes. I will make a mistake in seeing the date on my calendar, and so I have sometimes double scheduled people. There I am with my humanness, you know?

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Dr. Morris: Yeah, so they seemed, after they get over the shock, they seem to appreciate that.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. What about...

Dr. Morris: ...and it's alright with me, so it's alright with them. There's something contagious about that, you know?

Dr. Dave: I think I had shared with you in a previous phone conversation that I have referred to myself as a fool professor. I got promoted....

Dr. Morris: Yes, you did!

Dr. Dave: ...to the rank of Full Professor....

Dr. Morris: The fool would very likely to be involved....

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: ...in promotion, you know?

Dr. Dave: It feels so appropriate, you know, Fool Professor because at some level it feels fraudulent, and so it's a joke in some ways.

Dr. Morris: Well earned and fraudulent. That's true of all honors and prizes and all of that.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. What do you think about....

Dr. Morris: And....yeah....

Dr. Dave: Go ahead.

Dr. Morris: Well, I was just thinking, Why fraudulent? Because certainly a person has integrity and has done a good job and deserves the honor. That's right. But I guess for me, fraudulent because of all the people involved in one individual's success.

Dr. Dave: Mmm-hmmm....

Dr. Morris: And yet here you are or I am accepting the honor. Somebody's got to do it (laughs), but there is a fraudulent aspect to it.

Dr. Dave: Yes. What do you think of the folk saying, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Does that have any relevance here?

Dr. Morris: Yeah, it does. It depends on the context. I mean one can be naïve in areas where one should know better, and yet the fool is always beguiling a person to push beyond the person's known worldview, constructs, limitations, what one thinks one knows about oneself and life. So I think it's important to allow ourselves to be necessarily naïve as we open ourselves to other cultures, other ways of thought, what is happening in the web of being itself as we, hopefully, evolve in some areas. Things we never thought we would be thinking around communication, around our theologies, our institutions....

Dr. Dave: I guess I'm not sure what you're referring to when you say, "things we never thought we would be thinking."

Dr. Morris: Yeah. Well, I guess I never imagined I'd be as interested in inter-faith communication as I am, and never thought I would be attending Buddhist retreats, wanting to do Sufi dancing, loving the kinds of music I am now loving – Indian music, Indigenous music of all kinds, world music, jazz, blues, moving into even kinds of foods. I mean on that level I never thought I would be going to Turkish restaurants as my first choice.

Dr. Dave: So the fool upsets our expectations and our patterns.

Dr. Morris: In very way. In *every* way, and those basic patterns as well as our most cherished patterns. I'm thinking of my images of God, the divine, the Great Mystery, and how hard it is now for me to use the name God because it carries so much history and misunderstanding and extreme. So I'd rather use something like the Great Mystery (laughs) because it seems more inclusive to me.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Dr. Morris: I never thought I would be doing that. How my relationship with this mystery has changed. Where I am no longer measuring it by certain ritual standards or—I'm not sure how to explain that.

Dr. Dave: Ok.

Dr. Morris: I'm no longer measuring it. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: Ok.

Dr. Morris: And to levels of self-acceptance, acceptance of my tendencies, which are not lovely, but which probably always will be there. Tendencies to be extremely sensitive to criticism, to lash out in anger around a degree of disorder that really irritates me.

Dr. Dave: (laughs) But somehow the fool has taught you to be more accepting of these paradoxical aspects of yourself.

Dr. Morris: Oh yes. Oh yes.

Dr. Dave: The lovely and the unlovely.

Dr. Morris: Yeah, and I want my whole self to be present, not just what seems inviting and pleasing to other people. So my attention is less on what other people think and more on what is authentically mine to express.

Dr. Dave: Sometimes people talk about the trickster. Is that the same thing as the fool? I mean certainly there seems like there's a trickster aspect to the fool that we've been talking about. Do you see them as the same thing or are they different?

Dr. Morris: They're certainly related, but the fool is more comprehensive. In my view, the fool includes the trickster....

Dr. Dave: Ah.

Dr. Morris: ...and the trickster is darker in quality, includes an emphasis on certain aspects of deceit, and certainly turns things upside down the way the fool would. The coyote, for example, is trickster and fool, but the emphasis in coyote is darker and more thoroughly sensual. The fool has a sensual aspect; it can be extremely embodied and to most people's tastes obscene, but...

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: ...the coyote is really really highly sexed. So there are emphases that are different, and the trickster carries more of the darker collective shadow—what's not been included, in other words. Then the fool also carries what is joyous, creative, and what has been left out of our collective shadow. In that sense, there are many many people that do not include the possibility of joy, their own gifts, and that life could have something humorous and beautiful in many of its experiences.

Dr. Dave: So I take it, then, that you would advise that people get in touch with their inner fool?

Dr. Morris: I would advise that. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: Sheila Moon, about whom I spoke a moment ago, who was a poet and an analyst in the Jungian tradition and a specialist in Navajo mythology. She said that if there's any figure that we need now in our time, it is the image of the Holy Fool. And from having studied from her, I think what she was really talking about was our ability to step back and look at our institutions, at our priorities, at our image consciousness, at our disconnection from what is deep and mysterious, that connects with the archetypal world. Our disconnection from the power that love can have in the world, that imagination can have in the world – we're really disconnected from so much of that. And to think instead that, "Well violence is the only answer; after all you have to use force." I see that as a failure in imagination and a real disconnection from images like that of the fool, and I land on the fool because it's one of the most central. It holds within it the whole of our lives.

Dr. Dave: So how does a person get in touch with their inner fool?

Dr. Morris: By asking, "Where do I live in an unbalanced way? What are my extremes? Do I think too little of myself? Do I think too much of myself? What really bothers me in other people? What drives me crazy in other people?" These are the areas where we can look to the other sides of them. If I'm extremely workaholic, then what would be the other side of that? It would be hard for me to welcome, and that's where the fool is. The fool would want me to understand and experience the value of play. That's where living with an animal is so important. If I am extremely interested in the order and beauty of my home, what's the other side of that? It should be allowing areas of disorder – allowing relaxing, you know, knowing the value of relaxation, of allowing a kind of rhythm of order and disorder. So the fool is in those areas of the other side of who we think we are. So each of us, David, could make a list of who we think we are, and then turn the page over and write their opposites. And that's where the fool lives.

Dr. Dave: Oh...

Dr. Morris: And we could then watch for how those other sides, that we think we are not, present themselves. And they will, they will.

Dr. Dave: And if we're not aware of them, they may present themselves in ways that trip us up or....

Dr. Morris: Absolutely.

Dr. Dave: ...or make us look very foolish.

Dr. Morris: If I think I'm, you know, a very calm person and compassionate and all of that, and I did not give in to anger, I need to watch out because anger is going to take me over: on the road, in a phone call where I get a poor person from Bangkok or Bombay who's doing his or her very best to serve me, but who doesn't have a clue what I want or need...

Dr. Dave: Yeah, yeah. You've made a passing reference to the value of living with an animal. I know that you have a guide dog.

Dr. Morris: I do have a guide dog.

Dr. Dave: That's probably what you were referring to. Tell us, what is it that you've learned from your dog?

Dr. Morris: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: ...from living so closely and being so dependent, really, upon an animal?

Dr. Morris: Yeah, right. Well, you know, I've known dependence all my life, and people say to me, "Well, now do you get out more, dear?" (laughs) I've never have been in very long.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: ...but she nudges me to play. If I've been at the computer too long, she will take her toy, her favorite toy, and kind of gently poke me in the ribs with it.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: And she is such a representative of the Holy Fool. As a matter of fact, Sheila Moon said that animals are natural fools; they're just being themselves. That's what the fool's mission is: To help us just be ourselves, no more no less. That is the central mission of the fool. Anyway, Joy, she's my dog, went with me to the symphony, and I'm a very serious music lover and we went to a Bach Cantata performance, among other things. And in the middle of the most quiet part of this piece, Joy got up and shook mightily and the sound of her tags went all over the symphony hall. She was so freed up by that that she leaned over and licked the bald head of the guy sitting in front of me.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: And he just went straight up in the air! Very cool with it all, but she (laughs) – she was just tired of being confined. And so I wasn't taking into account her animal nature, and maybe my back was tired too, but you know we press on, we don't listen to our bodies. Anyway, she was so honest. Another time, not long after that, she was in my living room where I had things out for Christmas. I usually bring animals, and so forth, around a birth scene, including Herod, who I think is very important in the birth scene, and she went over when I was out of the room and she ate my terracotta baby Jesus.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: (laughs) The whole thing!

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: And the manger! She was pretty quiet for a day or two, but it was – yeah, the metaphors are great, and what kind of consciousness she was in by being with that are wonderful. But it's just she is who she is and does what she wants to do. She's highly

trained, so she really tries to stay within the training structure, but sometimes her instincts win.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Dr. Morris: And she will get up on the table and take a quarter of a cantaloupe with its raspberry filling and take it onto the white rug and eat it all.

Dr. Dave: Ah. (laughs)

Dr. Morris: Yeah.

Dr. Dave: You know, it takes me back to a recollection of the Shakespearian fool who can get away with stuff that nobody else in the king's court can get away with.

Dr. Morris: Well it's true, it's true.

Dr. Dave: It's like, you can't like that bald man on his head....

Dr. Morris: No, I really can't.

Dr. Dave: Even though you might like to.

Dr. Morris: I can't take more than my share.

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: Yes, I might. That's right.

Dr. Dave: (laughs) But the dog can get away....

Dr. Morris: ...there are times in restaurants when I would like to lick the bowl.

Dr. Dave: (laughs) Right, but the dog can get away with it.

Dr. Morris: But she could do that.

Dr. Dave: Because it's coming from her animal nature, her true nature.

Dr. Morris: Yeah. Sheila Moon says that above all else the true fool is humanness and fallibility and erring. That is who we are, that's what the fool is – of course we're gifted and marvelous and beautiful, and we do that, our process of being that, is very human, paradoxical, fallible, and we make lots of mistakes along the way. We have to, otherwise we don't make anything. Jung says, "If you don't make any mistakes, you don't make anything."

Dr. Dave: I had not heard that. That's a great quote.

Dr. Morris: Yeah.

Dr. Dave: By the way, I have to share with you. My first dog, a collie, when I was a boy I named that dog Joy.

Dr. Morris: Oh! I'm glad you did.

Dr. Dave: (laughs) Yeah.

Dr. Morris: She came to me named that.

Dr. Dave: Well there's a synchronicity there. Now I know you went and got a poem to share. This might be a good time to do that.

Dr. Morris: I do have one. Yeah. This happened at a very well-known retreat center in northern California, kind of a Mecca for people who are seekers. They have a bookstore and in the bookstore (laughs) I saw a sign among some figures of the Buddha, and it said, "Slightly damaged Buddhas—20% off."

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: So I wrote a poem from that....

Dr. Dave: (laughs) Great. I love that.

Dr. Morris: (reads poem) Slightly damaged Buddhas—20% off. In silence shop-one Siddhartha sits on a shelf, eyes downcast, lips turning toward a smile, revealing how time and experience can etch and scar wisdom's markings into bronze or clay or human flesh.

(resumes interview) And that's really the fool's expression. The fool's point of view.

Dr. Dave: What's your favorite writing on the fool? If some of our listeners wanted to delve more deeply into this area, what book would you refer them to?

Dr. Morris: I would recommend Sallie Nichols book *Jung and Tarot* because her chapter on the fool is just superb. I think it gives the best summary of anything I've ever found. There's another book called *The Fool and His Scepter* by William Willeford, which is very good. It's much longer and more scholarly. So Sallie Nichols writing is available, readable, short, and shows how the fool moves through all of the archetypal images in the Tarot, in ourselves, in life itself—that it's everywhere. So she would take, say, the image of the Emperor, which is in the Tarot major, a circle of images, and she would show how the Emperor also expresses the Fool. Any image in the Tarot, or any image you can think of, is related to the fool, which is one of the problems in trying to grasp what this image is. It's so comprehensive and elusive. That's its nature. That's why it's called the Great Mystery. Life is and death is the Great Mystery.

I'd love to read just a couple of sentences from Sheila Moon in terms of how she speaks of the fool. I think it's poignant...

Dr. Dave: Oh good.

Dr. Morris: ...and maybe fills out this image.

Dr. Dave: Ok, wonderful.

Dr. Morris: She says, "It's the quality of gypsy, of warmth, of willing acceptance of difficulty, of simplicity, of the child, or the classless servant, of the journeyer who is also a wanderer, as that which has identity and yet is never twice the same. Of that which is never successful and yet is always successful precisely because it is never successful. Oh, what a lovely gay parade of items. For a person like me, who has always been plagued by their opposites."

Sheila's a real perfectionist and always the full and important person, I mean an image for the perfectionist. And perfectionism is one of the great problems or issues of our time. And she also said in another place, which is not published, "The fool is the clown who has found the crescent moon after a long and suffering journey. It is the fool who after that journey, can hold out its lovely, longing hands to all humankind, hands that plead tenderness, eyes that cry out love and compassion, and the pain of being."

Ah, let's see if there's anything else here.

Dr. Dave: That's very lovely.

Dr. Morris: "It is the carrier of the most human and the most supra-human combined: carrier of pain and laughter, of upset and balance, of life and death, of kind dreams and terrible nightmares, of passion and loss, of the exquisite sorrow and laughter of all of living."

So, you know, there's something there that she knows because of her life. As a matter of fact, another book would be her life story. It's called *Dreams of a Woman*, published by Seagull Press. And in it, she tells her life story through her dreams and journal entries. It's a unique way of doing that.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Dr. Morris: And she speaks often of the fool, and you can really understand how the fool has expressed itself in her body painfully because she wouldn't listen, and pushed herself.

Dr. Dave: Ok.

Dr. Morris: As well as her body's psyche.

Dr. Dave: You know, as you was reading from her one of the things that flashed to mind was the role of the simpleton or the....

Dr. Morris: That's right.

Dr. Dave: ...honest child in all the fairy tales. That's another great image.

Dr. Morris: That's a good example, a really good example. As a matter of fact, from my point of view the fool seems to have five major areas of self-expression, and this might be useful: one is the area of wandering. The fool is preeminently a wanderer; there's something in us, if it is alive, must in some way wander.

And secondly, the fool is a bridge maker. Must connect, might find new connections, savors those connections, tends them – whether they're between ideas or images or people.

Thirdly, the fool is a bridge breaker and so must leave some of the connections that have been precious for the sake of what life is asking in terms of always leaving the torn womb. Always hatching, again and again.

The fourth thing is that the fool is one who knows suffering, failure, stumbling, mistake making, and all the pain of that: shame, embarrassment, and paradoxically knows that great wisdom, saving wisdom, comes from that. That there's a health in all of that. So the fool is a stumbling savior in us.

And the fifth area is that the fool is ever a guileless child in us, and is born and born and born, and hopes and hopes and hopes, and of course is betrayed and abandoned and the hopes are dashed. But hope never dies. As Peggy said, the French poet, "My little hope rises with me every morning." And so the child in us is eternal and the fool is like that.

Dr. Dave: Wow. Clare, that's a wonderful place for us to close off.

Dr. Morris: Oh, but I'm not finished!

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Dr. Morris: We can talk all day! Come on, David! (laughs)

Dr. Dave: (laughs) I could talk to you all day! I must say....

Dr. Morris: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: I sort of have a self-imposed rule. I used to limit the show to a half hour and I got feedback from listeners, "Well, we could use a little more depth..."

Dr. Morris: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Dave: Now we go about fifty minutes and you're right; we could talk all day. I would look forward to that.

Dr. Morris: Could I talk about my writings? Could I just a little plug-in for my writing?

Dr. Dave: Definitely. Please do.

Dr. Morris: Ok. The first is called *In Transit: Love Poems to the City*. It's about San Francisco and the fool's perspective on much in our city. It's more than you might think it is. It includes surprising chapters.

Dr. Dave: Could a person get that, say, through Amazon.com?

Dr. Morris: Yes, you can get that through Amazon. The second book is called *Child of the Longest Night*. It's a collection of poems around birth, death, re-birth, the child, the child archetype, and that aspect of the fool. That can be obtained through 707-528-8578. Both of those books can be purchased through Angela Center. The third is an anthology called *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace*, edited by Maxine Hong Kingston and published by Koa Books. You can get that from Amazon or booksellers. I have a piece there where I describe one of the times my mother and I were arrested for civil disobedience and went to jail together, and it certainly has much of the fool's journey in it.

Dr. Dave: Okay, well I hope my listeners rush out and buy all three of these books.

Dr. Morris: Well I hope so too! (laughs)

Dr. Dave: Ok. (laughs)

Dr. Morris: It was lovely talking with you, David.

Dr. Dave: Thank you, Clare. I really appreciate your being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

Theme music

I hope you enjoyed this conversation with Dr. Clare Morris. Personally, I found her voice so full of warmth and wisdom. I fell a bit in love with her during the interview. I found it especially remarkable, too, when she commented that she sees her visual disability as a good thing because it's taught her important lessons about the fool. What a wonderful example to the rest of us to bear our own present and future disabilities with such grace.

And you'll recall that my previous interview was with Shepherd Bliss, "In Praise of Sweet Darkness." It strikes me as very synchronistic that this next interview is with Clare, given how it came about. When I scheduled them, I was not only not aware that they knew each other but that they also are both contributors to the book Clare mentioned, *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace*, edited by Maxine Hong Kingston.

Moreover, I just happened to find out about Clare as a potential guest as a result of my attending the monthly meeting of my local Macintosh Users group, and I was with a buddy who struck up a conversation with a guy who was sitting next to us. I overheard that guy saying something about his woman friend in San Francisco being a Jungian. At that point, my ears perked up and I chimed in, enquiring if she might make a good guest for my podcast. And the fellow who I'd never met before said he'd mention it to her and

email me her contact info if she was open to it. And the rest of the story, the result, is what you just heard here.

Plus, I think Clare's interview is a perfect companion piece for Shepherd's, both of them being poets and devotees of depth psychology. What a happy set of synchronicities. I've always been drawn to the image of the fool in the Rider-Waite version of the Tarot. The card is numbered zero, suggesting to me the Zen concept of emptiness—empty mind, receptive mind. The card depicts the fool apparently about to step off a cliff. A little white dog is barking at his heels. The card is deliberately ambiguous, I think. Is he in his foolishness about to step off and be dashed to death on the rocks below? Is the little dog warning him of danger? Or is the little dog playfully joining in with him? Does the fool naively, but rightly, trust that providence is going to support him? Does he see something that we can't see? For example, a little shelf just out of view beneath the cliff. Also, the fact that it's the zero card also means that it can function as both the beginning and the end of the journey. One way of viewing the group of 22 cards known as the Higher Arcana is laying them out in a circle, running from the zero to the one to the two and so on all the way around to 22, and to see that as depicting the journey of the fool. The fool is traveling around the circle, and each card depicting a stage of psychological and spiritual growth and transformation; each representing one of the challenges that life throws our way on the path of personal evolution.

I echo Clare's recommendation of Sallie Nichols' book *Jung and Tarot*. It's truly an excellent examination of the archetypal significance of the Tarot images. As much as I rave about that book, it's very rich, but I've been reading it very slowly. I mean, really slowly. So slow in fact that though I've used it as a resource for several years, a bit before this interview I discovered that there are long clusters of pages, deeper into my particular copy, in which the pages are absolutely blank. I checked with Clare and those pages are not blank in her copy. So this fool professor is left to ponder the significance of fate having gifted him with this guidebook in which long sections are blank.

Hmmmm.