

## **Shrink Rap Radio #97: The Freud/Jung Letters**

**David Van Nuys Ph.D. Interviews Dr. Douglas A. Davis**

(transcribed from [www.ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://www.ShrinkRapRadio.com) by Jeremy Devens)

*Excerpt: The major thing here, and the work that he continued throughout his life to credit as his most important insight was the interpretation of dreams. Jung apparently got a hold of one of the 200 first copies published of that book and read it thoroughly, along with some of Freud's clinical papers, so he showed up as a very well informed, 20 years younger clinician, already at a doctoral level, he'd been working in Switzerland, rather than in Austria. He'd been working at a well known, probably the best known Swiss psychiatric hospital, and he worked under the direct supervision of Eugen Bleuler, who did the most important work in defining schizophrenia as a psychological illness. So Freud comes from the realm of neurosis and neurology, and Jung comes from the realm of treatment of psychosis, and to some extent, of a more standard psychology. His doctoral thesis has been a study of word association. So he actually had some experimental data of normal people giving their own associations of common words that resonated with Freud's clinical data on association in the unusual setting of psychotherapy. So for a whole variety of reasons, the two men were very drawn to each other. The story is that Jung stayed with the Freuds and the two men stayed up most of the night talking, and by the end of the night were convinced that in each case they'd found a kind of soul mate, and you can sense in the letters a lot of mutual admiration and a readiness to make this a lasting friendship*

**Dr. Dave:** That was the voice of my long time friend Dr. Douglas A Davis, who recently retired from full time teaching in Haverford College in Pennsylvania where he was professor of psychology and for many years department chair. Long time listeners will remember Dr. Davis from Shrink Rap Radio #15 on Islamic psychology, and #42 Happy Birthday Dr. Freud. Among his many interests, Doug is a Freud scholar, and he's also one of the most interesting conversationalists it's ever been

my pleasure to know. As you listen to the interview, I think you'll see what I mean

Dr. Douglas Davis, welcome back to Shrink Rap Radio

**Dr. Douglas Davis:** Thank you! It is a pleasure to be here, I feel quite at home.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, you should, it's your 3rd visit, and I think the last time is almost a year to the day, I was just kind of looking at it in my notes. So, that was too long (laughs).

**Davis:** Yes, because we were celebrating Freud's birthday, which, if you believe the dominant theory about his birth, it happened in *May* in 1886. There are a few people who believe it was March, which would have caused him to be conceived out of wedlock.

**Dr. Dave:** That would make Freud and me birthday brothers since I'm born in May as well. Maybe we're both Taurus's and that accounts for our mutual genius (laughs).

**Davis:** And it explains other deep synchronistic ties between the two of you.

**Dr. Dave:** Speaking of Freud, we're going to be speaking of Freud today. I know that you're a Freud scholar, and you have recently done some work on the Freud/Jung letters, their correspondence, over a period of years. I've read an article that you gave me a link to, and boy I learned a lot from reading that article that I didn't know. So I'm really looking forward to us having an opportunity to share that with listeners. The title of your article is interesting. It's called [Oedipus Redivivus: Freud Jung and Psychoanalysis](#). So a place for me to start is what the heck does Redivivus mean? (laughs).

**Davis:** Well, it's been a long time since my high school Latin.. It really means "brought back to life," and it's one of those words that can cut a lot of different ways. It could mean kind of a physical resuscitation, but

often in literature it means something that causes the strongest reminiscences or re-evokes old material, and what I'm alluding to, as I'll try to explain as we talk is, the idea that Freud was very focused on it. The point that his friendship with Jung was developing that most basic process of psychological development in childhood had a lot to do with this so-called Oedipus complex in which the little child tries to imagine the relationship that the parents have with each other, and feels jealousy and anger and so on, often focusing on lustful urges towards the parent of the opposite sex, and regressive wants towards the parent of the same sex. As somebody who read this article in it's published version commented, I'm trying to do a kind of psychoanalytic reading of the Freud/Jung correspondence, which went on over a period of years. I think to both of them, particularly as the tension began to grow toward the end of the relationship, both of them began to see this in somewhat Oedipal terms; Freud as another confirmation of how hard it was for his followers to outgrow their childish desires, and Jung as an all-too-revealing example of Freud's tendency to shoehorn everything into his theory, and to treat his colleagues as if they were his patients.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, well I think you've really jumped into it with both feet and just given us a lot of the punchline here. Let me back you up. By the way, I notice you say "E-dah-pull" and I say "Ed-a-pull." Have I been saying it wrong all these years?

**Davis:** I think either one is okay. Again, I have no idea what [Sophocles](#) would have said (laughs). I think "[ed-uh-puhs](#)" is more common. I think it's whatever works.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay great. Maybe you could start out by kind of setting the backdrop for us of what Europe was like for Freud and for Jung at the time that they met. Here's Freud in Vienna, here's Jung coming out of Switzerland... Can you give us, briefly, a sense of the flavor of the time?

**Davis:** Yes. The friendship between Freud and Jung lasted roughly 6 years, from 1906 to 1912.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, so short. I didn't realize that.

**Davis:** Yeah. Jung had already, as I'll say a little more about in a minute, Jung had already read quite a lot of Freud's work, and it was one of the things that impressed Freud tremendously when he appeared in Vienna and the correspondence began in 1906. They continued to know each other and to be concerned with each other for the rest of their respective lives. Freud until 1939 and Jung until 1961, but the friendship is striking, like some other Freud friendships, it's striking for the speed with which Freud embraces Jung and they become very close, as revealed by their correspondence. Then the relatively rapid unraveling a few years later.

So, when Jung comes to see Freud, Freud is 50 years old. He had celebrated his 50th birthday with the first group of people who called themselves psychoanalysts, and they are colleagues of Freuds, and mostly from the city of Vienna. People who he either knew directly through his medical training or his medical practice, and who have been influenced by his early work. That early work included, by the end of the 1890's, several papers on the treatment of neuroses, and Freud had become convinced by 1896 that many of the common neuroses, such as hysteria, where a person has little insight into their own emotional life, and often rapid changes in mood and so on. Nothing as profound as a mania or depression, but a sort of neurotic style, and obsession on the other hand, a kind of over-conscientiousness about trying to think one's way out of anxiety causing situations.

Freud had become convinced by 1896, based on his own treatment of his patients, in one case he reports 13 patient's, and in another one 18 that year. He's been using what becomes the psychoanalytic method, where you're encouraged by your physician to associate to the circumstances of your present life. So "I'm really angry with my boss." "What are you angry about" "Well, he always treats me this way or this way" "Has this happened before" "Well I've had other bosses before like this, I guess I had a teacher. Well, my dad was kinda tough on me." And then we begin talking about the father.

Freud had become convinced that these adult neuroses were the delayed results to relatively minor things that happened in early adulthood, such as the stress of a new job or the stress of maintaining an intimate relationship with a newly married spouse. That anxieties would be re-awakened that evoked this forgotten, this repressed childhood trauma. That Oedipal theory was very much on his mind. In fact, he had just published in 1905, shortly before Jung visited him, his [Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality](#) where he outlines his so called Freudian psychosexual theory of oral and anal and phallic phenomena. He had published in the same year [his case of Dora](#), which was his most thorough attempt up to that time to show how his psychoanalytic method worked.

The major thing he had done, and the work he continued throughout his life to credit as his most important insight was his interpretation of dream. Jung apparently got a hold of one of the first 200 published copies of that book and read it thoroughly, along with some of Freud's clinical papers. So he showed up as a very well informed, 20 years younger clinician. Already at a doctoral level, he'd been working in Switzerland, rather than in Austria. He'd been working at a well known, probably *the* best known Swiss psychiatric hospital, and he worked under the direct supervision of [Eugen Bleuler](#), who did the most important work in defining schizophrenia as a psychological illness. So Freud comes from the realm of neurosis and neurology, and Jung comes from the realm of treatment of psychosis, and to some extent, of a more standard psychology. His doctoral thesis had been a study of word association. So he actually had some experimental data from normal people giving their own associations of common words that resonated with Freud's clinical data on association in the unusual setting of psychotherapy. So for a whole variety of reasons, the two men were very drawn to each other. The story is that Jung stayed with the Freuds and the two men stayed up most of the night talking, and by the end of the night were *convinced*, I think, in each case that they'd found a kind of soul mate, and you can sense in the letters a lot of mutual admiration and a readiness to make this a lasting friendship.

So, just to tell the whole story very quickly, and then we can get into what the details might mean. Within a year or so, Freud's Vienna colleagues are hearing a great deal, probably more than many of them wish to, because in some ways they are a rivalrous band, competing for the master's affection, about this marvelous new disciple, who I think they must have felt was somehow smarter and more creative and possessed a knowledge that they didn't have. Freud was, although the psychoanalytic movement basically consisted of meetings on Wednesday nights in his own apartment, Freud was already thinking about this as a much larger movement. He saw Jung as someone who could bring the Swiss on board. He saw the contact with [the Burghölzli Hospital](#) and with Bleuler's work as good for the prestigious psychoanalysis, and he was also, I think, attracted, as the letters reveal, he was attracted by Jung's different background. Jung was the son of a Swiss reformed pastor. He came from a Protestant Christian background. Freud's Vienna followers were all Jewish. At one point, in explaining to them why Jung is going to be helpful to the movement, Freud says "We are all Jews, and if Psychoanalysis were to continue on this basis, we could be condemned as a 'Jewish science,' it's a kind of chilling phrase, because that's exactly what the Nazi's *did* say about psychoanalysis.

One of the things that happens to prevent any (conflict) between Jung or Freud or the Freudians and the Jungians in the 1930s is Jews are forced out of German speaking academic life, and Jung takes over the editorship of one of the journals. From a Jungian point of view, he tried to attenuate the damage being done to Jewish academia, but I think from the point of view of Freud sympathizers, and a lot of people who have studied Holocaust history, any collaboration with the Nazis was a major problem.

But of the period that they were close together. Jung went rapidly from being a sophisticated reader of Freud's ideas who had some doubts and was eager to be further educated by Freud, to being comfortable of being in the role of a kind of heir apparent of the movement, and he's very rapidly elevated to a position of international prominence. Then, in

1909, Freud and Jung and one of Freud's other most devoted and interesting disciples, with whom there's also a long published correspondence, [Sándor Ferenczi](#), he's Hungarian, traveled at the invitation of [G. Stanley Hall](#), the famous American psychologist to Clark University, which was celebrating its own 50th anniversary, and they gave professional presentations, both Freud and Jung did on psychoanalytic work. That's really the first public airing of psychoanalytic views in the United States. It's after that that the tensions begin to develop between Freud and Jung, and they seem to focus around Jung's desire to incorporate into psychoanalytic theory some of the uniquely Jungian ideas, the ideas we now associate with Jung, about the long course of human history and the way that our species history influences our individual history, and what Jung sees as broadening the evidential base of psychoanalysis, making it more relevant to history and to culture, topics that Freud is quite interested in, as evidenced by his own publications in the 1910s begins to make Freud uneasy, because it seems to Freud that Jung is allowing people to believe that they've embraced psychoanalysis without coming to terms with the difficulties of acknowledging everyone's psycho-sexual hangups... Which is probably way too much information at this point.

**Dr. Dave:** (laughs) Not at all. It's all very fascinating. So, when they first met one another, what was their assessment of one another? I think you've alluded to that a bit. How did Freud see Jung, and how was Jung looking at Freud?

**Davis:** Well, it's clear that Freud, as he told his family and his colleagues, thought Jung was an unusually talented young disciple, and someone who understood him well and deeply. It's interesting... I should say, by the way, there's enough Freud correspondence to occupy several years, if one wanted to go that route, but it's only in the case of Jung that the correspondence has been carefully edited from both points of view. So, Jungian scholars and Freudian scholars agreed that this correspondence was very important for both movements, and [the letters](#)

[have been very carefully presented in the 1947 volume by McGuire](#) that I use heavily in the paper you mentioned.

Jung says in the letters things like he said in his own publications about the time, for example, when he writes a preface to his own [Psychology of Dementia Praecox](#), which literally means the premature loss of our mental functioning, which was the name given to the condition that Bleuler renamed schizophrenia. Jung talks about his fascination with psychoanalysis, and this is in 1906, the beginning of the friendship. He says “I can assure the reader in the beginner I naturally entertained all of the objections that are customarily made against Freud in the literature,” and then goes on to say “I don’t attribute to the infantile sexual trauma the significance that Freud does, but it doesn’t mean that I place so predominately in the foreground, or that I rant at the psychological universality, and Freud’s therapy is only one of several therapies.” So that’s the cautious side of Jung. On the other hand, we find him writing to Freud a couple of years later, after he’s heard [Freud present data on one of his famous clinical cases, the so-called “Rat Man”](#) “I am still under the reverberating impact of your lecture, which seemed to me perfection itself. All the rest was merely padding, sterile twaddle in the darkness of inanity” So Jung knew how to administer a compliment, and Freud was hungry for that sort of thing. The other thing I should say, and I don’t really discuss it in any detail in the article you mentioned, which I should say, by the way, is a chapter in [The Cambridge Companion to Jung](#) a volume which was published in the late 1990s, and which is about to appear in another year or so in a [second edition](#), and a number of chapters have been rewritten. Mine hasn’t, because I decided that I really said what I had to say in the 90s, and I haven’t, to be honest, been very directly involved with scholarship of Jung in recent years. That volume is a good place to begin with Jung, because it has articles about Jung’s clinical practice and his influence on art and history and so on from a variety of points of view. Several of the authors are themselves Jungian therapists.

**Dr. Dave:** Thanks for that tip.

**Davis:** What was also apparent, over the conversation, was both men had some strange similarities of their kind of literary and artistic interests. They both discovered, for example, that [they had as students read with great interest H. Rider Haggard novel She](#), which is a very strange, kind of fanciful account of how a young Englishman goes off to the Middle East and is followed around by people in disguise who turn out to be the agents of a priestess in East Africa, who is the still-living temple figure of erotic Egypt who is bathed in the fire that has made her immortal. Freud and Jung both later on said, “We discovered we had deep interest in the problem of maternal feminine, and where gender differences come, and how all of this transcends individual experience”

Needless, to say, Freud never writes that story in any detail crediting Jung, but it’s there as a piece of background. When Jung later articulates his theory of the archetypes, it’s quite clear that the notion of the Anima, the kind of haunted image of the eternal feminine that every male personality is supposed to have within, just as every female personality has an Animus, which is some response to the maleness that is alien to females. Haggard as an author had somehow captured the essence of this. That readiness to jump off into literature is, of course, something Freud does off and on throughout his life; he’s reading the Oedipus play, and his reading of Hamlet, and his interest in Dostoyevsky and so on. Jung, for his part, uses writers like Haggard as evidence that there has always been concern in Western society with matters of ancient archetypal psychology that we more readily associate with the older civilizations. Civilizations of China and Egypt and so on.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. That’s really fascinating. You discuss that they each had kind of a psychodynamic motive for bonding to one another, that in Freud’s case, that he was actually pretty lonely and feeling isolated, and also you trace some possible, as you say, homoerotic motivations deriving from childhood and infantile impulses that would draw him towards Jung as a sort of a son figure, as well as just a male with whom he was very fascinated. Jung on the other hand was somewhat alienated

from his father and, at least initially, was projecting onto Freud very much of a father figure. Do I have that right?

**Davis:** Oh absolutely David, in fact, I quote in the paper a remark that Freud makes about his... He was the first child of his father's second or third marriage, there's a little mystery about it, a woman named Rebecca, but Freud's mother Amalia gave birth to him in what's now rural Austria. Then about a year later she's pregnant again and she gives birth to a baby brother to Freud named Julius. Julius was a sickly child and he died within about a year of life, and Freud later says "All of my male friendships have been affected by this early feeling that I had of some uncanny responsibility for my younger brother's death, and as a result, all of my close relationships, particularly with males, are somehow colored by this. In particular, my tendency to overvalue, then to feel rivalrous with a male colleague." Now that's a fairly indirect and coded way of talking about homoerotic matters, but if we look more closely, Jung at one point says to Freud...

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I remember reading a quote that was pretty specific on that topic.

**Davis:** Yes. Jung says to Freud at one point, I think this is early on, about 1907. "My veneration for you, Freud. As something of the character of a "religious crush," though it does not really bother me, I still feel it is disgusting and ridiculous, because of its undeniable erotic undertone. This abominable feeling comes from that fact that as a boy I was the victim of a sexual assault by a man I once worshipped."

**Dr. Dave:** I had never heard that about Jung.

**Davis:** Nor had I! It's very clearly in the correspondence, there's no doubt at all that Jung said it, but in the late 90's when I was researching this paper, I could't find much evidence that scholars had been able to elaborate on this, or that Jung had referred to this anywhere else. What it suggest is, and we ought to probably, for your listeners, just segue to the whole concept of transference and counter-transference. Freud is

struggling to define what becomes one of the most important ideas in psychoanalytic therapy today, and that is the notion that as you freely tell about all of your inmost feelings, and your most personal history and anxieties, and as you're drawn by the associative process of analysis back to childhood, you begin to feel a kind of dependence on the adult who you're telling all this that is like the dependence you felt as a child toward the influential figures in your life. In turn, being treated that way by a patient, being treated as if one were an idealized father, or a lovely, nurturing mother or whatever, awakens in the psychoanalyst longings to be seen that way, that are themselves childish in their basis. From one point of view, orthodox psychoanalytic therapy is the treatment of the original psychological illness or difficulty, the neuroses, by creating circumstances that allow the patient to develop a new version of the illness by becoming neurotically attached to the analyst, then the therapy frees the patient from that new illness, which can be seen directly because it's happening right there in the consulting room. Somehow that positive benefit makes it less likely the person will be similarly entangled in the future.

Well, to put it a little too simple, I think I came to see this like some of Freud's other relationships, it's a pretty good example of the kind of toxic misunderstanding that can easily happen. No one is suggesting, to my knowledge, and I'm certainly not suggesting that Freud and Jung had a sexual relationship, or even that they were very conscious in a regular way that they might have any erotic feelings for each other directly, but they were both very subtle clinicians, and, of course, they'd both read everything that Freud had written (laughs). That tone creeps in. So, when Jung has finally, really... 'had it' with Freud, we get, after the trip to Clark University and Jung is invited back, and on his second return he says, "They really liked my version of psychoanalysis and I was able to make the sexual business less frightening." and Freud says "Oh my god, there you go. You too are now being overwhelmed by your own resistances, and you're going to turn on me and offer a more palatable version of my theory." Well, Freud attempts to explain a little Freudian slip that Jung has made in a letter, "Even [Adler](#) and [Stekel](#) (two of

Freud's other disciples) don't consider me one of theirs" where he means Freuds. Freud tries to interpret this and Jung has clearly been getting very angry, so he writes "May I say a few words to you in earnest? I admit the ambivalence of my feelings toward you, but I'm inclined to take an honest and absolutely straight forward view of the situation. If you don't, so much the worse for you. I would, however, point out that your technique of treating your pupils like patients is a blunder, in that way you produce either slavish sons or impotent puppies; Adler, Stekel and the whole gang now throwing their weight about in Vienna. I'm objective enough to see through your little trick. You go about sniffing out all the symptomatic actions in your vicinity, thus reducing everyone to the level of sons and daughters who blushingly admit the existence of their faults, meanwhile, you remain on top as the father sitting pretty. For sheer obsequiousness, nobody dares to pluck the profit by the beard and inquire for once what you would say to a patient with a tendency to analyze the analyst instead of himself. You would certainly ask him "Whose got the neurosis?" At this point, things cool fast.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, let me step in here, because there's so many things being triggered by everything that you said. This last exchange that you just shared, I mean, it seems like it got down to, almost a sort of name calling, where they're both accusing each other of being unconscious, that there's something going on in their unconscious that they're denying, which is, ultimately, unprovable. It seems to me that's the kind of the weakness of psychoanalysis too, that "Oh, you don't recognize this, because you're unaware of it, because it's in your unconscious."

**Davis:** Absolutely. In fact, for me as a non-clinician, this moment in the Freud-Jung relationship became yet one more example of the real miscarriages that can happen in psychoanalytic collegial and patient relationships. You're supposed to be thoroughly psychoanalyzed before you become an analyst, you're suppose to know what it's like to develop irrational attachment to your analyst, and recognize it for neurotic and infantile, so that when you become an analyst yourself and people start

to treat you as god-like and beautiful, you realize that the image they have is a very idealized version of a... Balding, middle-aged, forgetful person, which you in fact are.

**Dr. Dave:** (laughs).

**Davis:** And these two men at this point are two of the most skilled people in the world at using those tricks.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**Davis:** Once the relationship degenerates to this level, it's sheer trouble. I might say also, the biggest Freud news in the last year in the popular press is the discovery in a European hotel record the entry of a supposedly married couple signed for by the husband who sings "Dr. Sigmund Freud, Vienna und Frau" and the Frau in question is not Freud's wife Martha, but [her sister Minna](#) who was living with the Freud's at this point. Jung was one of the people who suggested early on, then again later in life, that when he first stayed with the rFeuds, Freud's sister in law, who had a bedroom adjacent to Freud and his wife, wanted his advice as a psychologist about her relationship with a brother-in-law which Jung understood to be very close, quite possibly sexual. It seems increasingly likely that there probably was a sexual relationship, at least for a while, so Jung had knowledge about Freud that would have embarrassed Freud very much. They also shared intimate details about their treatment of patients, and in some cases these were people they both knew. The most striking and complicated example is a young Russian woman named [Sabina Spielrein](#) who was treated both by Freud and Jung and may well have had an affair with Jung.

So, once the name calling starts, they had a lot of tricks up their sleeves, and they have a lot of clinical evidence. You can *feel*, I think... I do think these are two of the most interesting people ever to enter the field of psychotherapy and try to write about it academically. There is a kind of tragic side, whether you think it's Oedipal or not, there's a kind of tragic

side to all of this, because the result is Freud and Jung can never really make a (unintelligible) and Freudians and Jungians have stayed at arms length from each other, I think, now to the present day. In Freud's case you get little comments in publications that suggest that Jung keeps popping into his mind, he says at one point, I think he's referring to the psychology of association, "This was an area in which Carl Jung made some important contributions at a time when that researcher was content to be a mere psychologist and did not yet aspire to be a profit."

Freud also accuses Jung of being overly intellectualized "You have to remember that Jung is a Swiss, and it's a national characteristic of the Swiss, if you offer a Swiss a choice between two doors; one leading to paradise, and one leading to an academic discussion of paradise, the Swiss will take the second door."

**Dr. Dave:** (Laughs).

**Davis:** At some level you could just relish all the nastiness. Unfortunately, there's a danger that people carry away from this that "Well these people were pretty screwed up, and I guess they weren't very good therapists, and so on." While I think that's an important set of issues to think about, these are brilliant and influential thinkers who are still of immense use to millions and millions of readers. It's a great a pity that so much was lost by this break down in collaboration. Jung goes on to do remarkable work on what we now call, lets say "the psychology of religion," and the fundamental circumstances of human societies all over the world. There's some truth in his own characterization that Freud is a well-read, post-enlightenment European, in terms of his scholarly origins, while Jung branched, even early in life, to Tibetan and Indian and Chinese and even to some extent Native American literatures as these became available, in a way that is quite alien to Freud's way of proceeding. It's been hard to bridge that gap, because there's this legacy of the two camps distrusting each other at such a fundamental level.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you know, it's really a good point that the two men are in a certain way of two different centuries or eras. Jung resonates so much with people today on some of those themes that you were just discussing, that it makes him very, very contemporary.

**Davis:** Absolutely. In fact... One of the things that I regularly did in my long years of teaching at Haverford, where I taught a lot of Freud for an undergrad curriculum, and I had a much smaller unit on Jung. I would always spend, when we made the transition from Freud to Jung, a few minutes saying "I'm caught up in Freud, in that I've spent a good many years reading a lot of his published work and trying to think about his biography and so on" and I've had this experience often as I've gotten older, I come back to Jung, I own most of his fundamental writings, and I read Jung on a topic Freud has already written about, and I'm struck by how fresh it is, and what an interesting new approach it is, and how even radically it helps to deepen one's understanding, and then at some point I discover that I don't quite understand what Jung is talking about, as if there's a part of my own background as a US, late 20th Century trained social scientist, that finds it... Freud is certainly no hero from a philosophy of science point of view, with respect to any of his hypothesis, but Jung seems much more mysterious and mystical, but I think for those very reasons, he moves people deeply, and in ways that clearly have been therapeutically helpful, in terms of spiritual growth, and I think Jung's characterization of Freud and the orthodox Freudians is far too obsessed with the first few years of childhood, so they don't have a fully adequate lifespan psychology, to say nothing of a psychology that transcend the individual life. All of this is beautifully conveyed by a dream that Jung talks about in his [Memories, Dreams, Reflections](#). Now, we have no idea of knowing how well Jung remembers this dream, but it was a dream that supposedly he had when he and Freud were on their way to America in 1909. I won't read the dream, but I urge you to find a copy of Memories, Dreams, Reflections and read it.

He's dreamt that he's in a large house, which he recognizes as his house, and, of course, an analyst, Freudian or Jungian, might readily assume that the house represents in some way the psyche, or the dwelling place of one's personhood. Jung's house is an immensely complicated place; it has a kind of a 'post-enlightenment' character in its upper floor, it has a more, sort of Baroque character as you go down, and I think it has a sort of Romanesque basement, and finally there's a sub-basement with a trap door and steps leading down to something that is apparently of pre-historic origin, and there are some bones in the ground. Jung tells this story and says "All Freud wanted to know is whose bones they are," and Jung makes that story a parable about the fundamental failing of Freud because Jung says "Maybe the bones are of someone significant, but to reduce everything to that is exactly the worst application of Freudian psychology. The question is 'what does it mean to believe at a critical moment in my life; I'm becoming a disciple of Freud, I'm going off on an important adventure, what does it mean to have a dream that I live in a vast mansion with all the touches and bases of human history and has such wonders to explore, and here's my mentor teacher and all he wants to know is 'let's get those bones out of the basement and re-animate them and figure out what's going on'"

**Dr. Dave:** My recollection of that dream and the discussion of it, there's another dimension as well, that apparently Freud wanted to interpret those bones as representing Jung's wish to kill his parents, and particularly Freud as a kind of parent symbol, if you will. So it really represented Jung's unconscious hostility towards Freud, ultimately. Where as Jung tended to look at it in terms of those bones representing the bones of humanity, which, in a way, symbolized his whole fascination and quest to understand the past; its mythologies and its archeological evidence and so on, and that it really represented the basement of the psyche.

**Davis:** Yes. For Jung that dream then becomes a wonderful example of the forward looking character of dreams. It becomes a nice metaphor for the larger issue that Jungians have continued to emphasize, that it's not a

question of knowing your childhood as if you're going to discover a hidden crime. It's, in fact, finding out how we can take the past and see it as a preface to the future. What are the potentials here for growth and so on. The dream itself is a kind of commentary on Freud. And, yes, you're quite right about the particular meaning of the bones. Jung says in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, that at the time he knew where Freud was headed, and he knew what he wanted to hear and he told him what he wanted to hear, and that was a sign of the beginning of his distrust. But something else happened, which is a standard part of Freud biographical lore; they were staying in a hotel, before they boarded a ship to Europe, and the dinner conversation apparently got tangled up in a story Jung had read in the newspaper; someone had found preserved bones in Northern Europe that seemed to reflect some prehistoric human remains, and he described Freud as surprising him, because Freud was interested in archaeology and had a big collection of antiquities and so on. Freud was very irritated by this and wondered why Jung found these corpses so interesting.

Suddenly they became aware that Freud is really quite angry and upset, where upon, to their amazement, he faints! And slips off the chair.

**Dr. Dave:** Freud faints.

**Davis:** Jung lifts Freud and puts him on a sofa and Freud's first words are "How sweet it must be to die." Freud himself becomes convinced that he had somehow misinterpreted that this is some sort of a death wish toward him. Interestingly enough, Freud then admits that it was in that very hotel setting that he and his best friend from the late 1890's, [Wilhelm Fliess](#), had had a huge argument that spelled the beginning of the end of their own friendship. It was a disagreement about the dearest psychological theories of each of them. Basically Freud argued that Fliess' theory of natural cycles of 23 and 28 days was basically a kind of mystical arithmetic that allowed him to answer any question. Fliess turned on Freud and said "Yeah, you just read whatever you want to into the dreams of your patients."

Again, this is so overdetermined by this time that by once the two men have gotten their interpretations of this, you could realize that it would have taken a lot of therapy by some neutral, brilliant therapist who didn't exist.

**Dr. Dave:** (laughs) Yes. They'd have to be very brilliant. I wonder if you ever saw the movie [Love at First Bite](#)?

**Davis:** Yes, I did.

**Dr. Dave:** There's this wonderful scene, and I've referred to this in an earlier show as well, because it's one of my favorite comedy movies, where Richard Benjamin is a psychiatrist and George Hamilton is Dracula coming to New York City in modern times, and they're competing for the affections of the woman. So the 3 of them are around a dinner table and Dracula and the psychiatrist are jousting for control of the situation, and they're trying to hypnotize one another. The one is saying "You're getting very sleepy," and the other says "No, *you* are getting very sleepy." It's just a hilarious send-up, and, again, this has some of that same quality for me. "You're unconscious is acting up." "No, *you're* unconscious is acting up." (Laughs) It's a very similar dynamic here.

**Davis:** Yes, I agree.

**Dr. Dave:** Now, the thing that they specifically fell out over had a lot to do with Freud's theory of infantile sexuality. You quote a very interesting passage from Freud where at one point he's kind of doubting the evidence. His early theory is one in which actual child abuse, actual sexual abuse was being perpetrated on children by adults, so he thought this was what was coming up in the analysis; people were having memories of that sort of event. At some point, he begins to question that, and part of what he says in the passage that you quote, in essence he kind of says "This kind of perversion can't possible be taking place with such frequency as this evidence would seem to suggest." I'm just

wondering, in light of what we know *now* about child abuse, is there a chance that, in fact, it was taking place with that sort of frequency?

**Davis:** That's a big topic...

I was fascinated myself to rethink that whole saga. By 1896, he's willing to argue that all of the psychoanalytic cases; whether it's 13 or 18, that he's been able to treat long enough so he's confident, have shown that behind the adult illness, there's a "pre-pubital sexual trauma," it might be in childhood or later, but before puberty, and by a year later, basically September or October of 1897, Freud is not rejecting the idea that sexual abuse occurs in childhood, and that it can often lead to neurosis, but he no longer argues that it's necessary, so that the vast majority of neurotics do not show any clear evidence of having been abused in a literal way, being the victims or incest or assault.

On the other hand, a great many deal of people develop profound neuroses that can be treated by psychoanalysis, accord to Freud, that in the course of the psychoanalysis, they begin to tell stories about caregivers; the father, the mother, the relative or whoever, in which they begin to wonder if they've been sexually abused, and that leads Freud to write several of his very interesting short papers; [my own favorite is one from 1899 called Screen Memories](#), where Freud using a slightly disguised memory of his own childhood is able to show that one of his most vivid and important memories of playing in a field with dandelions with a little boy and a little girl, a very vivid memory from his early years of life, almost certainly couldn't have happened the way he remembers. He then begins to argue that the so-called repressed memory of abuse is not the gold that we thought lay down there in the unconscious, it's not the hidden explanation of the neurosis in a way that a Sherlock Holmes mystery would be. Rather, it's a complex of ideas that lay next to gold, he says. That have been reflective of all those powerful, scary, erotic and aggressive feelings of early childhood, and that you can't really easily tell the difference.

Now the letter you mention, it's a famous one, it's September 21st, 1897 is quite remarkable. The way I use to get to the bottom line with my students was; if Freud had been right, that almost all neurosis was the result of sexual abuse in childhood, then his major impact on history might well have been that he would have helped us get concerned about child abuse early on. The neurosis would have been perfectly preventable, as Freud says: prevent child abuse, no neurosis. When he changes his mind, he loses a place in, maybe, the history of hygienic social work, and he also loses a little reference in the history of neurology, if he'd been able to explain how exactly sexual assault in childhood effects adult neuroses. Instead he becomes the author of a whole new psychology because everybody had an oedipus complex.

Freud makes that argument with a move, that I think had he stayed friends with Jung they might have worked on together, he says, and the reason we call it the Oedipus complex, he says in October 1897, "I understand now why we keep watching this replay; it's about a society very alien from ours, we already know the outcome, we know that oedipus has unknowingly killed his father and had children with his mother. But it moves us, despite it's alienness because on a psychological level it's not alien, we're all Oedipus." He goes on to say in the same later "Think of Hamlet, it's the same story, but it's as different from Oedipus Rex as Elizabethan society is from Ancient Greek society. Hamlet's observation that conscience makes cowards of the soul is a correct observation of the lasting influence of the Oedipus complex. We know that we have in fact had sexual and aggressive feelings toward our parents, and therefor we feel a kind of unconscious guilt." So that whole tangle... But to get to the literal truth... My own paper on this is titled "A Theory for the 90's." The reference I try to make in the paper is it was clearly quite timely, in terms of the way Freud was thinking in Vienna in the mid 1890's, it was also extremely germane to the way American clinical writing was being changed in the 1990's. Estimates of the percentage of American children who'd been subjected to sexual abuse went from a fraction of a percent to 20, 30, 40, 50%. The truth almost certainly lays somewhere between.

I think, thanks to Freud, we now recognize that there's abuse, in a literal sense, where children have been raped, and physically assaulted and psychologically manipulated. There's also a lot of simply bad, confusing, toxic caregiving that happens, for reasons partly rooted in our early psychology, and partly in the society we're raised, makes it hard for us to grow up in good adult relationships, and psychoanalysis is a part of asking that question, but I think most people, after what are sometimes called the memory wars in the 90s, with these vastly different claims with how frequent child abuse occurred... We now realize that it's extremely easy to be misled, as Freud himself realized he'd been misled, by a patient's account that "Yes, indeed, I think my father, my kindly uncle, my babysitter, might have done such and such a thing." and to take that as an established fact because the patient seems to remember it.

Again, what one would have to say as one looks at the whole force of critical writing about Freud and Jung; these are both men who had a deep interest in that topic and a lot of understanding of it, but they both seemed... less aware than I think we would now say they should have been about the ways they were treating their patients about these issues.

Jung clearly had erotically charged therapeutic relationships with many patients, and seems actually to have had sexual relationships with some of them. I don't know if anyone has ever made a plausible accusation that Freud engaged in what we would call sexual behavior with his patients, but certainly erotically charged entanglements are stock and trade.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. We're running long here, so we'll need to begin to wind down. But.. (laughs), there's just a couple more things that I really want to touch on. You offer a quote from Freud that makes it sound like he was feeling pretty dispirited about the efficacy of psychoanalytic therapy. You quote "The continual disappointment in my efforts to bring a single analysis to a real conclusion. The running away of people who, for a period of time, had been most gripped by analysis. The absence of the complete successes on which I had counted."

Now, did he ultimately have that feeling, or was this written at an earlier stage?

**Davis:** That is from that very famous letter in September of 1897. What it suggest is, and you have to sort of fill in the blanks, but I think you can do that plausibly, Freud seems to be saying that “If I’m right that the psychoanalysis is reaching an earlier, forgotten experience of abuse, that the child has been unable to deal with and that it’s that residue, we’d now call it a post traumatic stress disorder, explains the neurosis, then uncovering it ought to make the neurosis better.” At least in the context of that letter, he’s unwilling to make that generalization. There are people for whom he seems to have uncovered this, but in some cases it doesn’t help at all, or maybe it frightens the patient away. He also is saying that “I’ve begun to realize I can come up with other explanations of why people might feel this way.” He’s not quite able to say yet in this letter, but he will say it in his publications later... It’s very hard to tell the difference between a memory of a hitherto forgotten trauma, and a memory that feels traumatic because it touches those childhood issues. There is no easy indicator of truth or falsehood in the unconscious, if by truth or falsehood we mean historical truth; what actually happened? Psychological truth might lead us to say “This person acts in adulthood *as if* they had been treated this way in childhood.” We have to make that ‘as if’ statement, because many of these accounts have shown not to be true.

**Dr. Dave:** But again, the question is, how secure did Freud feel, finally, ultimately, about the effectiveness, not so much of his theory of personality and psychodynamics and psychopathology, but about psychoanalysis as therapy.

**Davis:** I think, David, we are about out of time, and the only honest response I can make is Freud *sounds* in most of his subsequent writings more confident than he does in this letter, but I myself am willing to psychoanalyze Freud to the extent of saying that confidence is somewhat exaggerated. I think that a part of Freud knows from 1897 on that he’s on somewhat shaky grounds with these assumptions, and that his

therapeutic successes are nowhere near as consistent as they would be if the Oedipal theory applied in a very literal, simple, straight forward way to each one of his patients. Now there are also remarks you can find sprinkled throughout his correspondence where he's willing to admit that he makes mistakes with his patients, and that every new insight 'costs me a patient.' You can read the Dora case as "I really didn't understand her transference with me, or my counter transference with me, and as a result she left early before she could reap the benefits of therapy."

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, excellent. Speaking of transference and counter transference, I have to compliment you. There's one sentence here early in the article where I thought, in one sentence you deftly describe the psychoanalytic therapy process. It says "The patient falls for an analyst whose every move (s)he will be capable of assimilating to the erotic and aggressive possibilities of the transference, and understanding the transference is the key to recovery from the neurosis." That kind of sums up the whole process, so I was struck by that.

**Davis:** I'm willing to stand by that statement by the younger version of myself.

**Dr. Dave:** And finally, you conclude with what I thought was a very nice conclusion that really is pretty thought provoking. You say "Had Freud and Jung sustained their relationship for a few more years, psychoanalytic history would have been very different. There might have been a complete and coherent account of the requirements for psychoanalytic therapy and training, an adequate theory of female eroticism and gender might have had it's beginnings, the interplay of sexual and aggressive emotions in human development would have been addressed explicitly instead of being tendentious anthropological speculation, and the spiritual aspect of life perhaps would have found a place in theory and in therapy." So, bravo, that's a wonderful conclusion. We can all dream about "Boy, what if their friendship had continued, and hadn't fallen upon the rocks." Like Freud and Jung, I

think you and I could have a much longer conversation that would go all night long.

**Davis:** Well, I think as we said at the beginning, this is the third go around, and as we did long ago as graduate students, I'm confident we aren't going to run out of things to talk about.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, good, because I would really like to have you back here on Shrink Rap Radio frequently. Now, just before we sign off here, I know you've always got a lot of interesting projects on your way. What are you working on now?

I have had for the last 1/3rd of my teaching career, I just fully retired last year, three fairly persistent interests. One has been in psychodynamic psychology, particularly in early Freud. The second has been in Morocco as a place and Morocco adolescence as a life stage. [My wife and I co-authored a book on adolescence](#). Finally, by the mid 90s I was intensely interested in the internet as a psychological place, and I had some brilliant students who studied social behavior on the internet and roleplaying and so on. What I've been doing recently, I'm back from Morocco, a place where I hope to spend a couple of months every year, working on a project called the Voices of Youth. The idea is to use podcasting technology, very much like what you're using, as a way to allow young people to explore the topics that of most relevance to their own lives; issues of family and school and job and courtship and so on, and to present this material in a way that makes it very very easy, because, Morocco, although it's a poor country has excellent internet connectivity now, and an awful lot of people carry cell phones and MP3 recorders. So, I'm trying to imagine, and to involve myself in the beginnings of the immersion of a Moroccan Arabic oral literature on youth. So I've been listening to Moroccan hip hop music, I've been talking to young Moroccans, I've been reading blogs by people who speak Moroccan Arabic, both in Morocco and in Europe, where there are millions of young people who have Moroccan Arabic speaking parents. I can't claim that this work is explicitly Freudian or Jungian in any particular way, but it seems a wonderful opportunity for a personality

psychologist to see something fascinating happen as a bunch of young people begin to explore their lives.

**Dr. Dave:** And it sounds like great fodder for a future interview (laughs), so I'm going to invite you back at some point to talk about that. Doug Davis, thanks so much for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

**Davis:** Many thanks David, it is always a pleasure.