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PROFESSOR:

Good afternoon. I want to do two things today and they involve two sets of Freudian jargon. I want to talk about Freud's so called structural psychology that involves the terms id, ego, and superego and will give me a brief chance to talk about Freud's theory of civilization as a whole. And then I want to talk about Freud's developmental psychology which is where we get these notions of an oral, anal, phallic, and then onto latency in adult stages of development. And that'll give me a chance to talk about fairy tales or more broadly about the practice of using Freudian ideas to interpret literary texts. The second part may well run into next Tuesday as I think about it.

Freud thought that babies came into the world thinking that they were co-extensive with the universe. That they were everything. Not that they were looking out in space saying, look, the stars-- they're me. But that what the initial experience of being a conscious entity was thinking that you're it, you're everything. It's not as though that's new with Freud. I won't attempt to do a reading of the piece of Tennyson that I put on the handout because I discover I'm a bad reader of Tennyson. But if you read that you will see Tennyson saying very much the same thing. That the job of an infant is to learn the use of I and me and finds, I am not what I see other than the things I touched. You've got to figure out what's you and what's not you. Freud thought this little bundle of-- that this universe of a baby wanted one thing, which talked about last time. The kid wants pleasure and the kid wants pleasure now, anyway he/she can get it. That collection of unbridled desires is what Freud called the id.

Now this all looks like very fancy or not very fancy-- looks like jargon, but in Freud's original writing it's not particularly jargony. It is just a Latinization of the word for it, the animal piece of you. The it that wants stuff and wants it now. The id is essentially unconscious. And well, actually to combine the two bits of the -- where does the id get its pleasures? Freud's series of developmental stages were driven by a notion of where the sources of pleasure were in the kid's life and so initially for instance, it's all oral. The fact that this all has a sexual overrun to it is in fact, probably more problem for Freud than useful for Freud. All right, so the kids get some-- oral stuff-- that what's giving the kid pleasure. That's sort of interesting. What really is important in this early stage of development though is well, one of the things is figuring out

who I am. How much of this universe belongs to me? And is this universe a safe place?

The real force behind Freud's stages of development are these stages where particular issues emerge really for the first time. Issues that will then turn out to be important for the rest of people's lives. So the initial issue that comes up in this oral stage of development is safety. Am I going to be fed when I need to be fed? Am I going to be warm enough? Am I going to be taken care of? That's newborn stuff, but it's not stuff that goes away. You know that concerns about, is the world a safe place is the sort of things that can occupy your mind now too. How you understand the world, how you understand those problems says Freud -- not unreasonably -- are likely to be shaped by these early experiences. If your early experiences is of a safe, comfortable world you're going to treat later challenges differently than if your early experiences-- who knows if mom's ever going to get around to feeding me again. That's going to be a different kind of experience.

The anal stage-- all right, why is it anal? Well, it's anal because Freud had some notion that there's certain pleasures in the elimination process and things like that. But the real issue here, the life-long issue that emerges is who's in control? And the reason that's an anal stage issue is because this is the point at which if you're an infant it's not just anything goes anymore. Up to this point the first great crisis of control in a little child's life is very often toilet training. Up to this point you could do whatever you wanted, wherever you want to do it. Now all of a sudden somebody's saying, do it there, now. Don't play with it. Don't do any of the various-- it wasn't disgusting before. Back when I was very little they looked at it-- oh, great [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. Now it's disgusting and I gotta put it over there. What's this about? And you got to figure out how much control do you have over yourself? And how much are you in the control of somebody else?

Here the issue is identity. Who am I? Identity. Who am I? And more specifically, what does it mean to the male or female? I'll come back to the details of that a little later on because it gets me a little ahead of the story. Presently we're still back here with little Mister Id. This unbridled collection desires who wants everything and wants it now. At some point the id runs up against what Freud called the reality principle, which is you can't get what you want all the time, exactly when you want it. If you haven't noticed this at this point that's probably a little grim. The ego, which is just the Latinization of the word for I or the self. The ego grows out of the collision of this little Miss Id with reality. So the ego has to check the desires of the id. And the ego is sort of the embodiment of this effort to figure out how much of the universe really is me.

So the sort of thing you can imagine a kid discovering is all right, I'm an oral stage baby. I like sucking on stuff. There are some things that I can suck on anytime I want. You know there's this thumb thing-- anytime I want it it's there. There's other things, like the bottle or the breast or whatever, they're different. I like them, but they're fundamentally different. They're not me. At the most basic level you have to figure out how much of the world is you.

Now this again, ramifies through the rest of your life. If you grow up considering that you are co-extensive with the universe and that you make the planets turn in their orbits, you're going to be an odd adult, right? You've got to shrink it down from that. If you shrink down too far-- I'm not in control of anything. This didn't work out well for me. I'm not in control of everything. I'm just a little worm pushed around by force-- you know, that's not going to be very healthy either. So the job of this emerging ego is to come up with some reasonable estimate of what your powers are and what it is that you might be in some sort of control over. So now the ego's busy there fighting with the id. So that the id is saying I want to kill my little brother. The ego says, you can't do that. The id says, how come? The ego says, well because mom would whack us. And the id says, I don't care. I still want to kill him. And the ego at this point starts to say things like forget it. We're going to repress that idea.

This is where you get the beginnings of ideas of repression that I was talking about last time. All of these Freudian bits of theories attempt to interlock in some fashion. So the ego is busy taking the more unacceptable bits of the id and stuffing them away in that unconscious reservoir of the repressed. Now you'll see that that's gotten you from an id who just was ruled by pleasure. This really essentially amoral id. You've now got the beginnings of a sense of morality here. It's not very sophisticated, but it's on the one hand, this would be fun. On the other hand, we can't do it because we might get punished. So it's sort of a reward and punishment. Why not rob the bank? Because you'll get arrested and thrown in jail. It's that sort of crime and punishment kind of morality.

Morality gets more complicated when you reach this oedipal stage of development. To explain that I need to say a little more about that stage, which I can see that on the handout I promised I would. I'll do the male version of this. If this is about identity and particularly, sexual identity-- there's going to be a male story and a female story. Let's do the male story and we'll come back to the female story. The large scale notion that makes some degree of sense is that you've got to figure out what does it mean to be a male? That's an important thing to figure out and it's likely that Dad or other adult males in the immediate vicinity are going to be

sort of a model for what that's going to mean. The difficulty for Freud or the start of the conflict in an oedipal conflict is that the child starts very much attached to Mom. It's Mom who provides nourishment. It's Mom who gave birth to you and so on. How are you going to get an attachment or identification with Dad?

Well, what Freud proposed was that little kids, little boys-- stick with boys here-- little boys initially see themselves in competition with Dad. They like Mom. Mom is great. They want Mom. All right, it's called oedipal because Freud saw a parallel with the Greek Myth of Oedipus. Oedipus, who kills his father and marries his mother. So you get this weird notion that somehow Freud thought little boys wanted to sexually possess their mothers and that sounds both weird and icky. Freud didn't do himself any help here, he was talking about infantile sexuality. Everybody heard the sexuality bit and sort of left off the infantile bit. Freud is not thinking in any sort of adult sexual terms here. He's saying look, the little kid likes Mom. Mom's a good thing. He wants Mom all to himself.

Now it turns out that there's Dad. Dad mysteriously seems to have some claim on Mom, too. And so the little kid in this infantile kind of way figures, I'm going to have it out with Dad. We're going to have a fight here man because there's only one Mom and I want her. I've still got a lot of id going on here, I want Mom and-- all right, that's Stage One. That's the conflict stage. I can't remember what buzz word I used for the second stage. Oh, the second stage is capitulation. Well, there's a problem with this conflict. OK, I'm going to have a big fight with Dad. Dad. Oh man, like Dad's really big. If Dad ever figures out that I want to have a fight with him Dad is going to kill me. Maybe he's going to castrate me, I'm not sure. But it's something really, really bad is going to happen here and so I better deny that I was ever interested in this. In fact, what I'm going to do is I'm going to reject, suppress my desire for Mom and I'm going to idealize Dad. I'm going to come to take Dad, in response to this perceived threat, perhaps to my very life I'm going to idealize Dad. And in some sense incorporate Dad into me. And that act of incorporation is the beginnings of development of what Freud called the superego. Another Latinization, this time of a term that just means sort of over I. You know, the thing that is above the self.

It's not quite your conscience. It's not unrelated to your conscience, but it initially for Freud starts out as the voice of the father for a little boy. Well, let's just say voice of parent. And will eventually become the voice of society as a whole telling you how to live. Not necessarily consciously, not necessarily explicitly, but telling you what the rules are. Now again, you might

think that this whole business of a conflict with Daddy over Mommy and the notion that you have some internalized voice of the parent that is going to be sort of the roots of your morality, your more sophisticated adult morality. That that all sounds a little strange. You can get a feeling for where such thoughts might come from again, if you hang around with kids. Remember last time we were talking about you know, hugging your little brother till he turns blue. Well look, I've now raised three sons through the oedipal stage of development. I think every last one of them at some point in the ages of around three, four the appropriate Freudian age has hopped into bed some Sunday morning or something like that-- into our great, big, huge, king-sized bed and asserted this bed isn't big enough for the three of us.

Why doesn't Daddy get out? And mostly what you're sitting there thinking is, no kid should never be born to a psychologist. What's he doing, reading the books on the side here? And then I thinking, what am I supposed to do now? You know, am I suppose to like threaten to kill them or something because that develops morality? So you can really see these sorts of seemingly oedipal comments in kids of that age and you can also sometimes here this voice of the parent as it gets internalized, like a little kid who's been told, the cake's over here. It's for dinner, don't mess with it. Don't go sticking your finger in the chocolate icing again. So no, no, no, you hear the kid say it. The nice thing about little kids is that the superego will verbalize itself for you-- no, no. So the idea is that the stress or the trauma of this oedipal conflict is what drives the superego down into the psyche almost like a spike from the outside. Well, I would be remiss if I didn't say something about Freud's theory about how this works out for women.

Now I might be remiss, but you wouldn't be missing anything in terms of-- people have all sorts of problems with this oedipal theory business. Because for instance, what happens if you get raised in a single-parent family with just Mom? Is there any evidence that your development comes out differently? No, in fact. So you don't need Dad there. You do need to figure out what it means to be male. Let me say a quick word about homosexuality. Freud regarded homosexuality seemingly as a variant of an outcome to this. He did not seem to regard it as a pathology. So he's got a very interesting letter written to the mother of a gay man. The mother was worried about this and he says basically, there's a bunch of ways this plays out. The mainline one is in the words of the old song you grow up to, I want a girl just like the girl who married dear old Dad. That's the sort of ultimate goal of this. In sort of the mainstream version you reject your desire for Mom, you go into this latent period. You go and you do math for awhile and then you wake up as a sexually mature adult, not looking for your mother, but looking for an appropriate object of your desires. Freud thought that there were other possible

outcomes. That they were just other possible outcome. Subsequent generations of American psychology declared homosexuality to be a pathology and it was only in the '70s that American psychology returned in a sense to this view that it's a variant, not a problem. So women-- how did we get to women. What's the problem with women?

The problem is you need the same fight thought Freud. He's got himself sold on this oedipal thing. And you need the same fight, but now you need a fight between the daughter and Mom for Dad. And the problem is that the initial bonding of the daughter is also to Mom. So that's no good because you can't fight with the person you're bonded too, so he's got to get the bond to flip. And so he came up with one of his less credible constructs-- the one that even good Freudians don't really believe in, which is penis envy. What is that? Well, he figured that little girls at some point figured out that they did not have something that little boys had, and that this was a disaster. This was very bad and they figured out that Mom didn't have one either. And therefore, Mom was defective and we ought to admire Dad instead. And then we can go and fight with Mom. This was traumatic, this discovery. But it wasn't so traumatic, so Freud also theorized that since it was that trauma that was creating the superego and as a result, adult morality that it followed that women were simply less moral than men. A conclusion born out anytime you open the newspaper, right? It's not one of the more successful pieces of Freud, but it is the source of my favorite, really bad experiment in this realm. Which was an experiment where somebody gave a paper and pencil test to a group like you. One of these sort of SAT things where you're filling in the little things with the golf pencils and stuff. And then you hand the thing back and the experimenters don't care a bit about the test at all. All they care about is who returned the little pencils. And more guys returned the pencils than women. Anyway, it's really lame. So look, the broad issue of what does it mean to be a boy or a girl, a man or a woman-- who is going to turn out to be an appropriate object for my sexual desire and so on? Those are interesting questions. There is considerable question about whether this actual oedipal conflict-- actually there's very little doubt that the strict form of it is not required. The single parent family thing is one good bit of evidence against that. And the woman story-- it's just kind of whack.

In any case, around this time you do get this development of a more sophisticated morality. And in Freud's view what you had was this poor ego here that was on the one side, assailed by the desires of the id that wanted to do all sorts of unspeakable and stupid things that you couldn't do in the face of reality and then there's the demands on the other side of the superego mostly, that doesn't want you to do stuff too. But anyway, it's got its own demand.

And the ego has to somehow thread a path through here. Now how does the superego let you know what you're supposed to do? Well, it says on the handout, does it? Where'd I put it on the handout? Oh, no, I put a blank. Look at that. The superego has a weapon that lets you know when you've done what it does not approve of. To figure out what that weapon is you can invoke your own introspection. What you need to do is imagine some activity that your parents would disapprove of. It can be society as a whole if you like, but parents will do. So think of something that your parents would deeply disapprove of if you phoned up and said, guess what I did. And ask yourself, how would you feel the next day?

AUDIENCE: Guilty.

PROFESSOR: Guilty, thank you. Guilt is the weapon of the superego in this view. So when you feel guilty a good Freudian would say, you're feeling guilty because you've done something that transgressed the boundaries set by the superego. Now look, I went out and I committed murder and I feel really bad about that. Yeah, all right that's not too terribly interesting. The more interesting case is where patients who said, I feel guilty. I don't really know why. I just feel this sense of guilt. And a Freudian would say, well look. This isn't all conscious stuff. You've apparently transgressed some boundary that you don't quite recognize yourself consciously, but it's there. If you want to get over this guilt we need to figure out what that problem is.

Now, how many people here enjoy feeling guilty? All right, so it follows that the ego, which is not eager to sit around feeling guilty is going to have some defense against that. So introspection oughta work here, too. Let's go back to that, whatever it was that you were going to do that would be really, really wrong. Now let's suppose you haven't done it yet. But you're going to do it. It's right over there. You can just go in and do it. How will you feel?

AUDIENCE: Anxious.

PROFESSOR: Anxious. I heard an anxious over there somewhere. Thank you for the anxious, wherever anxious is. Anxiety is considered to be the defense mechanism of the ego against the predations of the superego. So when you feel anxious in this context the answer is well, you're pushing up against something that the superego doesn't want you to do.

Now let's go back to the case where I feel anxious, but I don't know why. Classic Freudian view would have been there's some chunk of your superego that you're getting close to there,

it's rules and it's not happy with you. Any reasonable more modern view would include the possibility that you are just having an anxiety attack that we might consider to be more biological than psychological. That there are chunks of the brain that if they are overactive-- the experience is being anxious. If they're overactive for essentially neurochemical reasons you may feel a sort of a disembodied anxiety that's got nothing to do with whether or not you're about to do something that Mother doesn't approve of, but has everything to do with the balance of your chemicals. The current position in the pendulum that swings back and forth on how to handle essentially psychiatric issues would be to treat free-floating anxiety as essentially biological problem that we might want to medicate. And we tend to undervalue the possibility that you're feeling anxious for underlying psychological rather than for underlying neurochemical reasons. And of course, you can feel anxious for things that don't have anything particular to do with the superego or the imbalance of your neurotransmitters. If I stand on the lectern on one foot I might feel a certain amount of anxiety for this because there's a straightforward threat to my personal safety. So there are multiple roots into anxiety, but within this context anxiety is the warning sign that you are embarking on a course that mother would not approve of or maybe dad or maybe the broader society as a whole.

So the result here for Freud is that with this collection of psychological structures-- again, psychological structures, nobody thinks you're going to go into it an MRI machine and find the locus of the superego. But the result of this is that we don't end up raping and pillaging our way across the landscapes. We sublimate our aggressive urges into things like sports or work. The unbridled sexual desires of the id get redirected into courtship or into literature or into some other appropriate kind of realm. From this Freud ends up generalizing a theory of civilization as a whole. He wrote a very interesting book late in his life called *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Why its discontents? Freud believed that in order to be civilized you were going to have to fight against the desires of your id. Your id was going to be unhappy with you and you were going to have to fight against the whacko strictures of the superego, which were going to be too strict for any normal person to hold onto. You were necessarily going to be repressed, dissatisfied, and so on. That was the price you paid for being civilized. Or one way to think about this, one line from the book is that "the first man to hurl a spear-- sorry, to hurl an insult rather than a spear is the founder of civilization." The first man who can redirect that sort of id like desire into something that's consistent with maintaining a civilized world, that's where you start to get the possibility of civilization.

Now I recommend book to you in part because some of it is extremely entertaining, for all the

wrong reasons. As you may have gathered by now, not all of Freud's detailed ideas have stood the test of time. So I cannot resist the urge to give you Freud's account of the domestication of fire. Here's the problem as Freud saw it. Fire happens out in the world. What did primitive man do when he saw fire? says Freud.

AUDIENCE: Burned himself.

PROFESSOR: Burned himself. Well, that would be one possibility. Well, we can follow with this line, if you weren't going to burn yourself, what might you want to do to that fire?

AUDIENCE: Put it out.

PROFESSOR: Put it out. If you're a guy, how you going to put it out?

AUDIENCE: Smack it.

PROFESSOR: Smack it? No, that's if you're a dumb guy. No, Freud proposed that you would urinate on it. And that this was an essentially sexual act-- don't ask me why. But that the first man to renounce that desire, that apparently id like desire to go and urinate on fire-- he could bring the fire home and that again, would be a building block of civilization. Not only that, said Freud, this explains why in many cultures women are the keeper of the hearth. Why is that? Well, it's a great deal more difficult if you're a woman to urinate on the fire. It's just not going to work out well for you. No, you don't have to believe that. It's on page 37 apparently of my copy of *Civilization and its Discontents*. I mean, the book is a beautiful example of exactly why I think it's still worth teaching Freud. There's a lot of whacko stuff in there about peeing on the fire, but the broader, large scale thought that repression of infantile urges is a price that we pay for civilization is, it seems to me, a worthwhile thought to rattle around. That as you become more civilized in a sense, you end up becoming more repressed. That the id's going to sit there trying to escape and you fill more and more walls around it and you live with more anxiety and more guilt as the price for being in some sense more civilized. Now that's sort of a dark view. It's interesting that this dark view crops up-- later in his life he had to flee Austria from the Nazis. He was a sick and dying man when he wrote *Civilization and its Discontents*. It's a rather dark view of civilization. Suppose this is all true, in some fashion.

Well, as it says on the handout, how you going to talk to the children about this? If these are important issues and your kid is hopping into bed with you and saying, Daddy get out of bed. I want Mommy and stuff like that. How do you talk to-- I'll tell you how you don't talk to your kids.

You don't say, I recognize that at this stage in your life that you are thinking that you're in conflict with me, but what you need to realize is that I'm much bigger than you and if you pursue this much further-- see the scissors? You're in very big trouble here. That's not a conversation you want to have with a four year-old kid. Even if you're a psychologist. This is not a good idea. But you could imagine that these issues, which not explicitly understood by parents or children, but that these issues about, is the world safe? Who runs the show? What am I? You know, these sort of issues are issues that you're going to want to talk about. And if there's this sort of psycho-sexual development thing running underneath it those are the issues you're going to want to talk about in those terms.

Bruno Bettelheim, following up on ideas in Freud's own writings wrote a very interesting book called *The Uses of Enchantment* in which he argued that among other things, fairy tales or more precisely, folk tales serve the role of a hidden language or a way to talk into your children in hidden language about these issues. Fairy tales is an English term. It's a little misleading because fairy tales don't necessarily have fairies in them, but folk tales is the more accurate term. So something like the *Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, the brothers did not write those stories, they collected them. They were early 19th century anthropologists wandering around northern Germany getting Grandma to tell them stories. And a folk tale is a story that's not explicitly written down for literary purposes, it's a story that has a grownup organically from parents telling children and children saying, tell me the one about the witch with the candy house and stuff like that. And these stories-- the good ones-- get passed on and Bettelheim says the good ones get passed on because they do this kind of work. They allow you to talk about these kinds of issues. I see that I said, what are the characteristics of fairy tales? So I better say a word about that.

Characters in fairy tales are typically good or bad. You don't get-- in the woods there was a witch. She wasn't really, like really a horrible person, she was kind of misunderstood and she'd been abused as a child. No, she's a bad witch. And there was a boy. Very schematic chara-- oh, that's the second point actually. Very schematic characters often with names like the boy, the girl. Or just a simple descriptor like Snow White, which is just telling you something about how she looks. She's good, right? It's not that she's got issues or something, she's good. And they're figures that a kid could identify with typically. This is in contrast for instance, to myth. Oedipus is not a folk tale in this sense. You don't, at age four say, let me tell you about this cool story where this guy goes off and kills his dad and then marries his mom and he blinds himself in the end, it's really neat. But you say, ooh, that's really gross. But ask yourself-- we're

going to do *Hansel and Gretel* in a minute here. How many people know the story of *Hansel and Gretel*? Think about *Hansel and Gretel* in those terms. Or think about the headlines, poverty parents ditch kids in wood. Girl, five, cooks old lady in oven. I mean, this stuff is just as gruesome in it's own way as king of Thebes finds out he's married to Mom, blinds himself and wanders off into three more plays by Sophocles. It's not immediately obvious that it's just grossness that somehow differentiates myth and folk tale.

But the characters are typically something that a kid could identify with. They have optimistic endings, that clearly distinguishes you from Greek tragedy or something like that. At the end of a classic fairy tale good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. Witches get killed. Good little girls and boys go home and live happily ever after and stuff like that. But at the same time, while they're optimistic in their ending they do not typically have overt morals on them like Aesop's Fables or something like that. You don't get fairy tales that say, they came home after having cooked the witch and they said, we'll never go into the woods again or eat any candy, ever, ever, ever. It's good things happen to good people, bad things happen to bad people and [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. No overt punchline at the end.

An important point is that even if Bettelheim is correct, that these are somehow talking in this sort of coded Freudian language, parents don't know the language and kids don't know the language or don't know that they're doing this all again, sort of implicitly rather than explicitly. Nobody, except somebody who took too many notes in Intro Psych says, let's see-- the kid's three and he was making these cracks about the bed and Dad and stuff like that. Let's see, I need an oedipal fairy tale. *Jack and the Beanstalk* that'll work tonight. But the notion is that the kid will be requesting stories that address issues that he wants to hear about and that the parents may find themselves choosing stories to read or to tell that serve the issues that are arising in their minds at the time.

Now a lot of this has been somewhat diluted in our era because we tend to read fairy tales or watch them on videos where they have been turned into literary constructs in ways that they weren't in northern Germany in the 19th century or something like that. We'll talk a little later about some of the ways that Disney has modified some of the great fairy tales. They're wonderful things, but Bettelheim is very mad about the ones where the revisions that make nice at the end-- Cinderella stories where you do something nice to the step daughters, stepsisters-- you're not supposed to do anything nice to the stepsisters. They're supposed to get their eyes pecked out by crows because they're bad and bad stuff happens to bad people.

Cinderella isn't supposed to arrange for them to marry some duke or something like that. That makes Bettelheim very agitated. All right, let's talk fairy tales here.

So *Hansel and Gretel* is in this way of thinking about things an oral stage fairy tale. Oh, let me say something about that-- oral stage, that's like year one. And you're sitting there saying, I like *Hansel and Gretel*, does that mean I never got out of the oral stage? No. Remember the idea here is that the issues that arise in the oral stage about, is the world a safe place, for instance, are issues that will persist for the rest of your life. So you're a seven year-old kid in this view or something having a certain amount of concern about whether the world is safe and if you walked down the street to school you're going to get hit by a car or something like that. And maybe *Hansel and Gretel* would appeal on those terms. Another example would be, *Beauty and the Beast*. A female oedipal story, we will see, if and when I get to it. You're saying, I'm a guy. I'm a guy. I like *Beauty and the Beast*. Is this a problem? No. Part of this is not only do you have to figure out what it means to be a guy, you also have to figure out what it means to be a woman. You don't happen to be a woman, but it would be really interesting to understand what it might mean. And so again, you might be interested in that particular story not because some strange path is going on [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. These are interesting questions.

Hansel and Gretel. Let's step back. What's the family situation here? Who we got at the characters in *Hansel and Gretel*? Well, there's Hansel and Gretel. Who else do we have?

AUDIENCE: Father.

PROFESSOR: Father and?

AUDIENCE: The mother.

PROFESSOR: The mother?

AUDIENCE: Stepmother.

PROFESSOR: The stepmother. She a good stepmother?

AUDIENCE: No.

PROFESSOR: Or a bad stepmother? There are an awful lot of bad stepmothers in fairy tales. Now that's a little mysterious. There are a couple of ways to understand this. That one of them is to say that

in the days when childbirth was a much riskier proposition many more people had stepmothers because Mom had died in childbirth. As indeed happens in any number of fairy stories. And in fact, you can come up with an evolutionary psych argument that says that the stepmother that systematically favors her own genetic children over the step- children, but that's not the Freudian account here. The Freudian account is look, the initial mother who you encounter when you're a baby is a really good mommy. She does everything for you and she says yes all the time. You cry, she jumps. It's great. Eventually Mom gets tired of this and Mom starts saying no and Mom starts saying things like it's time to go poop in the bucket and not in your pants and all this other stuff. And that, in this view is the transition between good Mommy and bad Mommy and there are so many fairy tales where you get born to a good mommy and then the bad mommy shows up. Way outside of the range of what would be probable in the population. That you can imagine that it's a stand-in for something else. Maybe for a stand-in that you're coming out of this oral stage of development in this story.

All right, so what's the problem that's faced by our lovely little family unit? What's the issue here?

AUDIENCE: Poor.

PROFESSOR: Poor. We're out of money, so what's the specific result of being out of money?

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

PROFESSOR: A few hands would be handy rather than the general purpose muttering. No? We've scared them off. What have we run out of here? Food. We don't have any food. The natural thing to do when you've run out of food is do what?

AUDIENCE: Gather some.

PROFESSOR: Gather some. Well, that didn't work apparently or at least that was a really boring story. You know, once upon a time there was a mother, a father, and a little boy and girl and they got hungry and they went in a field and they gathered mushrooms and unfortunately they were poisonous and they all died. That was one of those stories that didn't get repeated. You know, tell me the story about the poison-- no. So what happens in *Hansel and Gretel*?

AUDIENCE: Get rid of the kids.

PROFESSOR: You get rid of the kids. You stick the kids out in the woods. But *Hansel* hears the plan, mom and dad are busy discussing this at night. Hansel hears about it, he does what?

AUDIENCE: Runs away.

PROFESSOR: No, he doesn't run away. That's the Russian version.

AUDIENCE: Kills the parents.

PROFESSOR: Kills the parents, no. Wait a second guys, I thought you said you knew this story. Let's get this straight. He goes out into the garden, he collects a bunch of white stones. He leaves the white stones behind as a trail and--

AUDIENCE: Bread.

AUDIENCE: Bread crumbs.

PROFESSOR: No, that's the second time. You guys are all going to flunk the final. This is very bad. So first time it's white rocks and when the moon rises so you can see the white rocks, they come back. So you've got an oral stage problem. There ain't no food. And the initial crisis where the kids get left in the woods is met with a nonsolution. You just returned back to the same situation. Second time, same thing. They get abandoned out in the woods, but this time this nasty old Step-mom has been cagier about it and locked Hansel in and all he's got is his bread. And so now he tries what you can think of as an oral stage solution to an oral problem. He leaves this collection of bread crumbs behind. Does an oral solution solve this problem? Well, no. What happens to the bread crumbs?

AUDIENCE: The birds eat them.

PROFESSOR: The birds eat the bread crumbs, so there's no bread crumbs. And they wander around and they fall asleep in the woods and there's a beautiful chorus in the Engelbert Humperdinck opera which you should all hear sometime-- gorgeous opera-- and Engelbert Humperdinck really was his name. Very sad, but the opera's lovely. Anyway, so the next day they wake up. They're hopelessly lost. They wander around. They're hungry. They're not terribly happy and they find?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

PROFESSOR: The house, right. The house made of gingerbread and candy and stuff like that. And so like all

good little kids what they do is engage in a little petty vandalism. Gretel eats a window and Hansel eats a hunk of the roof and then they hear this voice saying, "Nibbling, nibbling like a mouse, who's that nibbling at my house?" And they respond, "The wind, the wind doth blow from the heavens to the earth below," which makes no sense. But anyway, so out comes the?

AUDIENCE: Witch.

PROFESSOR: How do you know she's a witch?

AUDIENCE: Because she's [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Now the way you know she's a witch it says is because her eyes glow red. This is a tip-off in case-- this is practical advice for you. If you're vandalizing somebody's house and the owner comes out and her eyes are glowing red, worry about it. But that this means that witches don't see very well, which turns out to be handy. They have keen senses of smell we're told. Anyway, this witch-- now the interesting thing about these fairy tales is that you have a problem at home and then you are thrust out into-- well, in the north German versions of the Grimm fairy tales are into the woods to solve it. Somebody will have to tell me what you do if you're reading Saudi Arabian fairy tales whether you get thrust out into the dunes or something like that. But the important thing is you go out away from-- you don't solve your problem where it is in these stories typically. You out and away and what you find out there in story after story is a caricature-- an extreme version of the problem at home. So here we've got an oral problem. There isn't enough food or perhaps, if we're thinking in infantile terms, where's the food come from if you're an infant? Well, it comes from Mom. So not enough food means you've kind of eaten all that you can eat off of Mom and you might worry, what's going to happen if Mom wants this back? Well, what you find in the woods is this orality gone nuts because what this witch does is eats little kids. That's her stock and trade. And she's going to eat Hansel, but it turns out he's too skinny for her. So there's this fattening up period. Eventually, it's cooking day and the witch says to Gretel, climb into the oven and see if it's warm because we're baking bread-- haha. Climb into the oven and Gretel who's onto this says, I don't think I can do that. Can you show me how? And the witch says something like, you silly goose. Anybody can do that. And she climbs up to the oven and Gretel slams the door on her and she perishes horribly, making loud screams. Which, not much better than blinding yourself and things like that. But is deeply satisfying in this story. So now they've killed off this symbol of orality and there are two important things that happen thereafter.

First of all, what they now discover is that the house is full of gold and jewels. And they stuff their-- there's a little more looting going on here-- but they stuff their pockets not with candy, not with more oral solution kind of stuff, but now with something that allows them to go home and have moved to a different stage. A stage, where in principle they can be contributors, not just consumers. This isn't supposed to be an accurate model of what happens-- one year-old kid moving out of the oral stage. Oral stage kid doesn't suddenly say at the end of a year OK look, like I'm weaned and now I'm going to go do chores. You've got to understand this in a little more symbolic way. Rather than an oral solution we've got a different kind of solution. The other thing that's very emblematic here is what do the children find when they get home? Anybody remember?

AUDIENCE: The stepmother is dead.

PROFESSOR: The stepmother is dead. Presumably, the stepmother is dead at the instant that the witch is killed because they're in a sense, one and the same character. They are the problem. They are the emblem of this oral stage problem. It gets killed off and everybody's good. Well, I think before the break, I'm going to skip the anal stage for the present. I promise to come back with an anal stage fairy tale. But what I'm going to do before the break is I'm going to skip to-- and there are lots of oedipal stage fairy tales and I am going to use *Jack and the Beanstalk* as an example of an early oedipal stage fairy tale. *Jack and the Beanstalk*. All right, let's do *Jack and the Beanstalk* quickly.

Jack and the Beanstalk, what's the crisis at the beginning? What's Jack sent off to do?

AUDIENCE: Sell the cow.

PROFESSOR: Sell the cow. Why are you selling the cow?

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: It's not giving milk anymore. If you want a nice clear image that you're out of the oral stage, the cow having run dry on you is pretty good. So Jack's supposed to go off-- he's supposed to do the Hansel and Gretel thing, right? He's supposed to go from the dried up cow thing and get some money so we can go do the food thing the other way. But what's he do? He trades it for...?

AUDIENCE: Magic beans.

PROFESSOR: Magic beans. All right, he comes home. Is Mom happy about this?

AUDIENCE: No.

PROFESSOR: No. So what happens to Jack? He gets sent to bed without any supper. Another sort of end of oral stage kind of image. And Mom does what with the beans?

AUDIENCE: Throws them out.

PROFESSOR: Throws them out the window or sows his wild oats or something like that. In any case, something grows really big at night in this story. You don't have to be a vastly Freudian imagination to think that this looks a little phallic here maybe. Anyway, you wake up in the morning and there's this giant beanstalk. Climbs up the beanstalk. You climb up the beanstalk. What do you find at the top of the beanstalk?

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: You find another-- just like in *Hansel and Gretel* you find a cartoon version of what was at home. So you find the castle, which is just the house and who lives there?

AUDIENCE: Giant.

PROFESSOR: Well, who does he find when he gets there first? The giant's wife. Or the ogre's wife who's the stand-in for Mom. Is she bad? No, she's really very nice. They have a very nice relationship. They're playing all day. The problem is "Fee, fie, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread." Otherwise known as Dad has come home.

One of the things that's sort of interesting here is that this models a classic sort of nuclear family with a stay-at-home mom that-- and you can sort of imagine in the context of this oedipal conflict. So here's the son. All day long he gets to play with Mom. You know Mom's cool. Mom's great. And then this ogre comes home and he wants Mom and he wants dinner. And he wants to grind up little kids and stuff like that. A little strange, but it is an image of the situation that a young child might find himself in. Now you might wonder whether in a few more generations our fairy tales will have to change in response to the-- in my family both of us were out of the house working. So the nice giantess at home model isn't going to quite work. You sort of wonder whether or not in a few years, a few generations or something, Jack will be

there with the nice daycare provider or something like that and the mom and dad giants will come home at the end of the day. Fee, fie, fo, fum, let's microwave the little bum or something like that. But in this version you got Dad. He comes home and-- the dad's stand-in and so what does Jack do?

Well, first of all, the mother hides him in the oven, which is a sort of womb-like symbol, which is rather nice. But he goes out and steals stuff from Dad-- from the giant. He spends all of time ripping Dad off here and basically being in conflict with Dad. Eventually he tries to steal Dad's golden harp, which is bad because the thing makes a racket. He got the goose out of there without the problem. Goose that lays that golden eggs-- good thing to steal. Kept the goose quite, but the harp made a noise. Anyway, the giant catches onto this and what's he do? What's Jack do?

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

PROFESSOR: Didn't understand a word of that. Where's Jack go?

AUDIENCE: Down.

PROFESSOR: Back down the beanstalk. What's he do with the beanstalk?

AUDIENCE: Chops it down.

PROFESSOR: He chops it down. It depends on the version -- either Dad crashes or the giant crashed or not. But in any case, if this was a full blast oedipal story you'd be going [UNINTELLIGIBLE] and get to the point where you go off and for instance, marry the princess or something like that. This is a partway oedipal-- not all the way through the story-- thing. You get that beanstalk and you get rid of it. Either it's sort of a reversion back or it's going into a latent period. None of this stuff that grows in the night-- nothing man, we're done with that for the time being. Nothing good happens here. Large, big guys chase me around when I do anything of that and forget it, so it's a story that doesn't get all the way through to the end of this whole psycho-sexual story that Freud's weaving. So let's see here. All right, I've already given you a hint that classic male oedipal stories are those stories where you do end up marrying the princess. I'll say a bit more about that in a minute. But let's take a short break because otherwise I'll never get to the end of this.

AUDIENCE: Thanks for the final. Can you put up some links for me because I really don't remember some of these stories.

PROFESSOR: Oh, don't worry. No answer on the final would require you to know the details of the story. And I hope I'm telling enough of the story that you can get the feeling for how it maps back and forth to the bits of Freud. But if you happen to be fond of fairy tale literature the Bettelheim book is a lot of fun to read. I mean, it's now-- how old is it? God, it's twenty-five years old. I read that sucker when it came out the first time. Anyway, I keep looking for new stuff to read on it and there's nothing as good. It's fun to read.

In the full blast male version oedipal fairy tales there are endless ones of these and they are of the form-- they're very typically of the form-- the lead character is typically somewhat older. Often described as a prince rather now than as a boy. Rather than being like abandoned in the woods, he is now thrust out of doors by his father for some crime or other. He has to go out into the world. He's at home in this oedipal conflict. They reach the crisis in the conflict and Dad literally says, I'm going to kill you. The king says, I'm going to kill you or something and he's got to go out into the world. And he goes out in the world and has adventures. What he does out in the world in these stories is very typically to kill a stand-in for the father. In Greek tragedy, you may kill your father. In a fairy tale you kill the ogre the dragon, the giant-- something that stands in for the father and the reason you're doing this is because the ogre, the giant, or the dragon has in his possession, what?

AUDIENCE: Princess.

PROFESSOR: A princess. Almost always a princess who thinks that the prince is really quite nice and all that. And not Mother. You don't go out and rescue your mother from the dragon. It just doesn't happen. What you're going to go out in one of these stories and do is find an appropriate mate. Not the inappropriate oedipal conflict stage mate. You're going to go out and find the princess, kill the dragon. You're going to then bring her home and everything is going to be good. And in fact, at this point typically in one of these stories the King will not die, but will retire. And Prince Charles in England been waiting for this for years, but it's never worked out for him. You come home with the right princess and the King retires and you get to rule the roost. That's getting through all the way to the end of the story.

Now female oedipal stories are different in interesting ways because of the difference in the traditional family structure. If in a male structure you've got the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk* who comes in only intermittently because the primary care-giver is the mother. The female's got the conflict with the primary care-giver, so you have in these sort of stories the

girls who are captives of nasty, older women in some fashion or other. So let's look, for instance, at *Snow White*. *Snow White*, another one of these names where the name is just a generic term. She's white as snow and got hair as black as coal or something. I don't remember. Anyway, lovely mother-- lovely mother dies. The husband, the King remarries another lovely woman, but a very jealous one. The jealous stepmother has what cool device?

AUDIENCE: Mirror.

PROFESSOR: The mirror made famous most recently in *Shrek* endlessly. And the cool thing about the mirror in *Snow White* is it speaks not literally, but figuratively with the voice of the little girl. Initially, when the stepmother asks, "Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the fairest of us all?" The mirror says, you. It's you. The voice of the little girl saying, look, I idealize you. You're my mother. You're the greatest thing since sliced bread. Little later, "Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the fairest of us all?" Well look, Queenie, you look pretty good for a woman of your age, but have you seen Snow White? You know, she is a blossoming, young woman here and hmmm-- well anyway, this drives the nasty old stepmother nuts. And in the best tradition of oedipal stories she decides to do what with Snow White? Kill her.

Another characteristic of female oedipal stories is that the dad tends to either be absent or useless. The King does nothing here. The other dad stand-in who's the huntsman, who the Queen gives Snow White to to have her killed. The huntsman fails both the Queen and Snow White. Disney's actually quite close to the original story in this one. The huntsman takes her out into the woods, doesn't have the heart to kill her, but also doesn't have the guts to save her so loses her out in the woods basically. He goes off and kills what?

AUDIENCE: A deer.

PROFESSOR: A deer. Does what?

AUDIENCE: Cuts out its heart.

PROFESSOR: Cuts out its heart. Brings it home. The Queen does what? She eats it. Nice woman. Anyway, so she goes off into the woods. What does she find out in the woods?

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

PROFESSOR: Hi ho, hi ho-- she finds a lovely little encapsulated anal stage fairy tale is what she finds. The

women will have some intuition about this. If you told your mother, Mom, I found this really great housing arrangement at MIT. I'm going to go and live with seven hairy guys. Would mom be thrilled? No, she would not be. If however, they're the dwarves from *Snow White* even though the ones in Grimm aren't Sleepy and Dopey and Whiffy and Waffy and whatever they are in Disney-- you wouldn't worry about it because these guys, they're little asexual guys. There is no sense of threat here at all. And what do they like to do? They like to dig stuff out of the dirt and put stuff back in the dirt. And dig stuff out of the dirt and put stuff back. And they're devoted to Snow White, they think she's great. But they're a little anal stage fairy tale tucked in there. And so the problem is that the mirror rats out Snow White, right? "Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the fairest of us all?" Yeah, yeah Queen you look great. Guess who's blossoming down in the woods with a bunch of little hairy asexual guys? So she disguises herself, the Queen disguises herself and goes off in an effort to kill Snow White. She tries three different times and they are interestingly emblematic of an effort to keep a girl from turning into a woman.

The clearest one of these is the corset that she sells-- she goes as a peddler woman and sells Snow White a corset that squeezes her body back into a little girl body so hard that she can't breathe and falls over dead. Or semi-dead. And always at the last minute-- Hi ho, hi ho and the dwarves come back. She's dim. You know, it's one of these sort of fool me once shame on me things, but three times she goes and falls for the old lady thing. And the last time it's with this Adam and Eve kind of apple. She eats the apple. The dwarves come home and she's dead and they can't do anything about it. Now what would the natural thing be to do under those circumstances? Bury her, right? Or something. She's dead. What do they do? They put her in a glass coffin. It says they can't bear to bury her. They put in a glass coffin and put her in a clearing in the woods. And it says in the story that she continues to grow into a beautiful young woman, which is a lovely image of a latency stage, right. Nothing's happening, but she's turning into a sexually mature woman is what's going on here. You would think that the dwarves might catch on. There's something weird here guys. That normally the dead body thing doesn't work like this. But anyway, the dwarves don't-- she's getting beautiful and through the woods comes the...?

AUDIENCE: Prince.

PROFESSOR: Prince. The prince does what?

AUDIENCE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

PROFESSOR:

Nah, the prince doesn't kiss her. None of that stuff. What the prince does-- I can't remember if he does this in the Disney version, but in the traditional version the prince orders the dwarves to bring the coffin to his castle. What is he thinking? You know, this would be a really cool coffee table? It's very weird stuff. But what happens is the dwarves who have been extremely careful all along-- the dwarves trip, the coffin shatters and the apple pops out of her throat and she's alive, she's fine. This is a story that doesn't quite get all the way through to adult sexuality in the sense that the story ends without her saying that she loves the prince or anything like that. It says, he was nice and so she went with him. It doesn't quite get you all the way through. The classic stories that get you all the way through to the end of the story on the female side are the so-called "animal groom" stories. I don't have time to do *Little Red Riding Hood* really. But *Little Red Riding Hood* is a story where all men are beasts and they stay beasts. The classic versions of female oedipal stories that get you all the way through to the end of the story are the ones where the beast is redeemed by the love of a good woman. You know, one class of these is kiss the frog and it turns into a prince. But let's do *Beauty and the Beast*.

Now *Beauty and the Beast* in the Disney version is a wonderful movie about female empowerment or something like that, but it's a long, long way from the original folk tale version of it, unlike the Disney *Snow White*. So let me tell you a little more about the version that is in Grimm's fairy tales-- if you aren't familiar with it. So in Grimm's fairy tales or in the classic *Beauty and the Beast* story for starters, there's no reason why the Beast is a beast. In these stories typically, the Beast in the Disney version is a beast because he's got no love and he was nasty to whatever she was who showed up at the door and stuff like that. None of that in the traditional version. He's a beast because some old woman said, you're a beast. In the all men are beasts school of beasthood.

So when we start out with *Beauty and the Beast*, Beauty is at home with her two sisters. No Mom onsite at all in this one, but there's Dad and Dad's going on off on a trip. Not because he's got some whacko cool invention, he's just going on a trip and he says, what do you want me to bring back and one greedy, old sister says, oh bring me a Mercedes and the other one says, bring me a fur coat and Beauty who's a bit of a sap says, just bring me one rose. So anyway, he does well on the trip and he gets the Mercedes and gets the fur coat. He forgets the rose, right? So he's coming home and he passes this ruinous castle and there's a rosebush of course, and he says, nobody's going to miss one rose, right? So he goes and

picks the rose. So bad move because out comes [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. And you picked my rose, now I'm going to kill you which seems a little disproportionate, but you know, he's a beast after all. And so the daddy explains way more than he should be under the circumstances. Oh, I was just picking one for my daughter-- and the beast says, OK. Fine, I won't kill you. Send me the daughter. Dad says, OK. There are two ways of looking at this. One of them is that dads very traditionally, in animal groom stories are the person who, in a sense, walks the daughter down the aisle here. The other way of thinking about this more charitably about Dad is that Dad's thinking, I'm just getting out of here man. I'm not going to send my daughter back. But he goes home. He tells the story and very much like in the Disney version Beauty says, hey, you gave your word. I gotta go. And so she goes off to live with the Beast. Now the Beast-- well, he's a beast, but he's kind of like a gentleman. He's not really a bad beast as these things go. They live a perfectly reasonable life there in this grungy castle. Every night, after dinner he says, will you kiss me and she says, oh yuck. You're a beast. And he doesn't press the issue, right? And they just go on like this for a long, long time.

And eventually she gets a postcard or something-- no, gets the wedding invitation. She gets an invitation that says, your sister's getting married. Why don't you come home for the wedding? And the Beast is reluctant to let her go, but says, you can go as long as you come back within a month or I'll die. So she goes home and big, long party, I guess because she forgets all about it. The magic mirror in some versions, but in any case, on the thirty-first day she either looks in the mirror or realizes in a dream or something that the Beast is dying. The castle is in ruins. The Beast is dying. And she wishes herself back there. She's magically transported back there. Nobody gets to get killed on the roof in the rain or anything like that. She realizes that she does love this beast and kisses him and kaboo! Now he has been redeemed by the love of a good woman and he's no longer a beast. You've gotten through all the way to the end of the story.

So *Little Red Riding Hood* there's no sense that she's going to go marry the Beast. In *Little Red Riding Hood* what you've got is the situation where Little Red Riding Hood says to-- when confronted by the Beast on the road in effect she says, I'm much too young for you. I'm an inappropriate sexual object. Why don't you go see Grandma? She's a much more experienced woman. Go read your *Little Red Riding Hood* again. *Little Red Riding Hood* gives way too much-- if you go and meet a stranger, a bad, scary stranger and he asks a bunch of questions you're not supposed to say, I live or I'm going to Grandma. She lives at 400 Shady Brook Lane and I think she leaves the back door unlocked. That's more or less what Red Riding Hood

does. So what the Wolf does is it goes there and gobbles up Grandma. Gets into bed and then gobbles up Little Red Riding Hood. Who is later delivered by cesarean section, more or less and describes the whole experience as yucky. Not scary. It was all just sort gross. And when the Wolf is captured by the huntsman, Daddy, the Wolf is described as you old sinner. What's that about? Anyway, the *Little Red Riding Hood* ends with Little Red Riding Hood saying, I will never go off the straight and narrow again. Because the Wolf's been saying go smell the flowers. Go off the track and stuff like that. So that's a story where you don't get through the whole thing. If you wanted to write a Little Red Riding Hood story-- you wanted to morph it into a full blast story-- I suppose it'd be a little crass if Little Red Riding Hood had to go and marry the guy who killed Grandma. That's a little gross, but she'd end up kissing the Wolf at the end and the Wolf would turn into something nice.

There's a great MIT fairy tale-- a tool and die fairy tale, but you'll have to ask me about it some other time.