

SAINT GERMAIN
A SECRET HISTORY

Appendix C:

EXCERPT OF INTERVIEW WITH PETER DAWKINS
APRIL 2, 2019

INTERVIEWER. Why is it important for us to study Shakespeare? How will it benefit us?

DAWKINS. I've been to many plays now over the years, in performance, and you kind of know that half the audience don't know half the time what the words are that are being spoken, unless they've studied Shakespeare, really. But if it's good acting it doesn't matter because the actors, through their acting, through their gestures and so on, they give over what the words mean, if they're good actors and good directors, because that's the secret of acting—to act the words that are there. You don't try to change it, you act what is there and you get into the part, into what could be called the spirit of each character. And every character, in the Shakespeare plays particularly, has what you could call the *spiritual archetype* behind it. And therein lies the secret. Because really, the Shakespeare plays were all allegories, you know, the histories are not entirely true histories, although they're based on a bit of history, but the rest is made-up story. But they're stories with meanings, and a lot of the meanings are very hidden. And they're constructed in a similar way as to how the Bible is constructed, with layer after layer after layer. And if you want to go deeper, the signposts have to get deeper. And with the plays you get this profound understanding about human psychology. And this is four hundred years before people like Jung. Shakespeare already understood human nature, human psychology, and how it works; and deeper things, what one might call the spiritual matters, the deeper aspects of the human

being, and the world that we call the spiritual world of angels and divine world—whatever names you might give it.

In Shakespeare's time, the poets used the names from classical times, the gods and goddesses, because the Church at that time didn't allow too much direct naming in Church terms. Essentially, Shakespeare plays were talking about the role of love and what happens if you're loving and what happens if you're not loving. And so, you have the comedies, for instance, which always have a good ending. They have a good ending because the characters in that, even if they make mistakes, they are loving. And that love is what carries them through mistakes and allows them to correct things—correct their perceptions, correct their emotions, and they end up in a very good way. That's called initiation and there is a process for that, a recognized process, which the mystery schools teach. And Shakespeare knows that process, it's *there* in the plays, absolutely, if you know how to look for it. They go in cycles and with steps and degrees in each cycle. And that's quite exciting, because then you can understand how the Shakespeare plays help you to understand and go through your own initiations in your own life, to recognize the stages in there and why you get the challenges, and how best to respond to them.

The tragedies will show challenges coming. But if there's not love there, because there's not love—something that's the opposite, anti-love basically; through selfishness, greed, jealousy, you name it, even the worst horror that Shakespeare shows—because there's no redeeming factor, no real love being shown or shared, everything sinks down and down and down to the normal ending. If you're young, you're not experienced in these things, but if you're older you get more experience, you see that if wrong things are done, they don't survive. It's like they kill off each other. Only the good actually survives over a long period of time. The bad does not survive. It makes war on itself and that's that.

But the Shakespeare plays are lovely because they do bring a redeeming factor somewhere, usually with the sound of music or a sound introduced to it, something of a heavenly nature, and very often through a woman. Shakespeare is very pro-woman, pro-feminine, which is rather lovely, especially for those times. In a sense you could say he's the first feminist, though a lot of modern feminists wouldn't see it that way. But often the great heroes of the Shakespeare plays are the women; they're the heroes, they're the heroines. But that's not to say that the men don't also become heroes. It's the hero's path, for a man or a woman—*so clearly* in Shakespeare plays.

But, again, how it's performed depends on the director and the understanding of the director and the actors too. The actors usually do what they're told. So, it's fundamental that the director understands some of the depth, otherwise it *can* be missed. And the Shakespeare plays I've seen, some of them being rubbish performances really; they're not true Shakespeare.

INTERVIEWER. Can you give an example of a common Shakespeare play that maybe many people know, and the cycles of initiation that one of the characters would go through?

DAWKINS. Well, that's a big question. One of the most popular plays, of course, is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is lovely. It's very enjoyable, and you can enjoy it on lots of different levels. But in it you've got these four characters, really, two couples who have got this love, but the love gets mixed up. And so it's a question of how to sort out that love so you get the right people loving the right partner. So, that's what the play is, and it shows the cycle—through the bringing in of the fairies, the imaginary realm, actually the realm of the psyche—of initiation. Something comes into their lives which confuses; first of all is the confusion, sometimes it's described as a tempest. But confusion comes in, and then after the confusion, as long as there's an earnest love or desire, that will take them on to the next step, which is

to understand, to see clearly, and then eventually to do the right thing. But the first thing, you have to sort out the desires. And they need to be loving, to honor initiation. And then it has to be the right object of desire, the right purpose for perception to come in. So in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, you see this whole emphasis on the eyes, putting ointments in the eyes and changing people's perception. And where they put their love is changed because their perception changes. So there's confusion to start with, which is the funny part of the play. Then a new ointment is put on which makes them clear-sighted to the right people. So, it all ends up very happily, like in fairy stories. They all live happily ever after; ho, ho, ho. [*Laughs*] That's the point, you get to this point of happiness.

In real initiations in life, you can go through cycle after cycle of this. In Christian teachings, it's symbolized through baptism, transfiguration, crucifixion in the sense that you're putting things into action in an unselfish way, so you're sacrificing your own ego, selfishness, in order to do good for others in the world. A better word for that would be service, or charity. Faith, hope, charity is another name for the three main steps. Being loving in your desires, understanding in your thoughts, not being judgmental in the wrong way but having a clear perception to understand what really is right and what's wrong or what the problem is. And then to work out how to put it into action to help; if it's a problem, how to help the problem.

The whole depth of teachings about what are called power points or gateways in the stages of initiations, which you learn to recognize in your own life and go through. The ultimate is to open your heart so much, in a genuinely good way, and to get your perception so clear that you become visionary in the right sort of way, and your actions become wise and good and successful in doing good. Eventually you get better and better and better at this as you gain more knowledge each time. Knowledge and truth is the same as what's called illumination—

illuminates the mind, gives joy; you light up, your face lights up. People's faces light up in that joy that is beyond just ordinary happiness. You know something that's truth; you recognize something else; you recognize their love, recognize something that is truly good. You know it. You know it because you've experienced it yourself. It's that knowledge of experience, of that truth, which is love. Shakespeare shows the way in these plays, comedies in particular.

Tragedies show the opposite, because ultimately the only way we can know the real truth is to experience something that isn't truth, and the theater is the safer place to experience that, matching real life itself. I mean, who wants to be in a war—everybody's killing, bombing, and hurting each other—in order to learn? Much easier to learn that sort of thing in the theater, and then you can have your own rapport and understand what it's like and think, oh, no, I don't want to do that, that's totally the wrong thing to do. And if I did start, it's going lead to that and that and that. Disaster piles on disaster until somebody loves. And I think a lot of the Christian teachings, to me, I think they're the most fundamentally good teachings in the world—revelatory. And the main Christian teaching is love God; God is love; love God, or love love, and love your neighbor as yourself. All of the law and the prophets is summed up in that. That's the main thing we're here on earth to do. And then we can create paradise together.

And the Shakespeare plays, of course they're not the only sacred texts—because they are sacred, they are mysteries—they're not the only ones, of course, in the world, but they are *brilliant* and very well designed for the present period of time we're in.

INTERVIEWER. What would be a good way for people to access the plays if they are a little bit intimidated by reading the original texts?

DAWKINS. If the original text puts you off (it's what put me off in school), it's best to read a synopsis, a short synopsis, a good synopsis, and see a performance. And then you'll get an idea of the wording that's

being used from the actors themselves, and then when you do read the real text, it will make more sense to you.

INTERVIEWER. Do you recommend any of the books by Charles and Mary Lamb, to read the stories of the plays?

DAWKINS. Yes, they're good, the Lamb books are good.

INTERVIEWER. Anything else you'd like to add?

DAWKINS. About Shakespeare? It's a big thing. It's not just about psychology, it's about initiation; helping to create life to be better for everybody, becoming a hero or heroine in a good way, not just for fame and fortune, but a genuinely good person. But it takes you into things even beyond that, really. Difficult to talk about in an interview, but it is a mystery path; it's like a treasure hunt . . .

INTERVIEWER. What is the meaning of life and what is our purpose?

DAWKINS. Yes, what is the meaning of life? And why am I here? And who am I?

INTERVIEWER. You learn not to take life too seriously?

DAWKINS. Yes, you learn that life is full of humor, and that humor is good as long as it's not at the expense of anybody else. And that life plays little tricks, like fairies; they're tricks but they're not to hurt anybody, they're to make life richer and fun, like party tricks. And, of course, one of the great secrets that Shakespeare gives is that we're all actors on the stage of the world. That's what we do, we're acting a part, but it helps to know something of your role and what you're supposed to act. So, the initiatory part helps you to get to know the role you're playing and how to play it better; and the help to call upon to do it better. It's great fun. And it's surprising what it brings out in people, even if they're reticent to start with. Once they try it out, they might be very shy to start with, and suddenly, it's like the role takes over, and they're suddenly *in it*, and they enjoy it! And they do it very well usually. And there's a key in acting: when you've acted that part and it's time to stop and to become yourself again, you've got to shake it off

because you don't want to be stuck in a Macbeth, for instance. You shake it off, otherwise it could carry on working on you.

Because all these characters of archetypes, with other names like spiritual beings or ideas—and they are living ideas—you can tune into them to act the part; good actors will do that. They'll tune into that living idea, living archetype, which will then inspire and empower them. But when you know the time is right, stop that. You've got to shake it off. That's it, enough. Resume your ordinary life. Ultimately, the Shakespeare plays ought to teach you what is your *own* spiritual archetype. What is your own living idea that's behind you? What are you, in other words?

INTERVIEWER. Could that be different than the archetypes that are presented in the plays? Or do you think the plays present all the archetypes?

DAWKINS. I think they probably present all the archetypes that are known to man.

INTERVIEWER. So then, you could identify your own archetype by studying the plays?

DAWKINS. I think so. And I think you can also see the possibility of moving from one to another. If you think the archetype I'm tuned into isn't quite right, I want to improve on it, you can make that effort; archetypes develop themselves. If we make the effort on earth, if we think the archetype isn't quite right, if we make the effort to improve here on earth, it will also improve the archetype. It's sort of like the spiritual world or heaven affects the earth, but the earth also affects the heavens. It's what's known, it's called the hermetic wisdom, the ancient wisdom. As above, so below. As below, so above, doing the great work. Shakespeare shows it over and over again how this works. It's really clever.