

From Heaven to Earth:

SHAKESPEARE RETURNS

BY ROBERT R. LEICHTMAN, M.D.
THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP
OF D. KENDRICK JOHNSON



The Second in a Series



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SHAKESPEARE RETURNS: 2-

“The original version of *Romeo and Juliet* was very bad, I thought. I burned it.”

“All through the history of mankind, censorship has always *appeared* to protect public morals, but censorship has always been aimed at something else. It’s always political.”

“Behind the scenes the action was even more bawdy than it is in the modern theater.”

“The plays almost wrote themselves. The ideas came so clearly and so completely—not only to my mind but the company’s mind as well—that a play would almost write itself once we started working on it.”

“Any creative effort, any attempt to construct a tangible, physical reality from an idea, is a high form of magic.”

—William Shakespeare,
speaking through the
mediumship of
D. Kendrick Johnson

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A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

*for the benefit of readers who are becoming
acquainted with our series, From Heaven to Earth,
for the first time*

Shakespeare Returns is the second in an important new series of books written by Dr. Robert R. Leichtman. Each book in this series is the transcript of a conversation between Dr. Leichtman and the spirit of a well-known genius or psychic, conducted through the mediumship of D. Kendrick Johnson. The interviews, which were mostly conducted in 1973, grew out of an idea of Dr. Leichtman's to write a collection of biographical sketches which would rekindle public interest in the exploration and investigation of the human mind and psychic potential.

As Dr. Leichtman began composing a list of the people he might wish to write about—people such as Shakespeare, Edgar Cayce, Helena Blavatsky, Carl Jung, Thomas Jefferson, Arthur Ford, and Nikola Tesla—it occurred to him that all of them had left the physical plane. Not only that, but they were also all people with whom he had communicated clairaudiently at one time or another. So, rather than just write bio-

graphical sketches of them, he reasoned, why not speak to them *directly*—through a medium—and let them talk about their lives, experiences, inspirations, and current thoughts *in their own words!*

The choice of a medium was an easy one. Dr. Leichtman immediately thought of his good friend, David Kendrick Johnson. Dr. Leichtman knew that Mr. Johnson had been “entertaining” Cayce, Madame Blavatsky, and many of the other spirits on his list for quite some time already. And he respected David’s talent as a medium to work compatibly with creative and innovative spirits. A first-rate artist in his own right, David has the understanding and competence which make it possible for other creative geniuses to speak through him, mediumistically. So Dr. Leichtman broached the idea. Mr. Johnson responded enthusiastically.

By the time they began the series of interviews, Dr. Leichtman and Mr. Johnson had drawn up a rather impressive list of people to interview, heavily weighted toward those who had been gifted with unusual inspiration and vision while alive in the physical body. They decided, for example, to contact such outstanding mediums and pioneers in the exploration of life after death as Edgar Cayce, Arthur Ford, Eileen Garrett, and Stewart Edward White. Also making the list were a number of mysterious “occult” personages: Cheiro, the actor-turned-palmist who gained much fame in Europe for his amazing predictions around the turn of the century; the controversial Madame Blavatsky, who helped found the Theosophical Society and who claimed to be in contact with superhuman “Masters”; and C.W. Leadbeater,

the clergyman who became a clairvoyant and author of many books on the invisible dimensions of life. Rounding out the list were a number of geniuses who obviously had led inspired lives while being less overtly psychic: Shakespeare; Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud; Thomas Jefferson; Nikola Tesla, the electrical genius; and Sir Oliver Lodge, the British physicist, educator, and early psychic investigator.

As it turned out, all of these people were still actively interested in the work they had begun and eager to talk about it with Dr. Leichtman. In fact, not only were *they* happy to appear through Mr. Johnson, but so were many of their friends and colleagues in spirit as well. In this interview, for example, Shakespeare is joined by Queen Elizabeth I, during whose reign he lived and wrote, and the Japanese playwright Monzaemon Chikamatsu, whose life and work paralleled Shakespeare's in many ways, in a much different culture.

As the series' title, *From Heaven to Earth*, suggests, the purpose of this project is to acquaint readers with the current thinking of these outstanding individuals, even though they have left their physical bodies and now work on the inner dimensions of reality. Many new ideas about psychology, psychic phenomena, science, literature, human civilization, and the future of mankind are set forth in these conversations—as well as plenty of good humor.

It is not the intent of this series to document the existence of life after death—or the effectiveness of mediumship in contacting the spirits of those who have left their physical bodies. Nor is it necessary, for these matters have been scientifically proven many times

over in other writings—indeed, in many of the books written by the people interviewed in this series. The doubting reader will find ample proof in the works of Sir Oliver Lodge, Stewart Edward White, Eileen Garrett, Madame Blavatsky, C.W. Leadbeater, Arthur Ford—and countless others.

Instead, the interviews in *From Heaven to Earth* are offered as a way of demonstrating that we need not be content with just an echo of great geniuses who have lived and died; their voices can literally be heard again—their spirits and ideas can actually return to earth. Heaven is not some faraway place inaccessible to mortals. It can easily be contacted by competent psychics and mediums who have correctly trained themselves—as have Dr. Leichtman and Mr. Johnson. And such contact can produce insights and new ideas of great importance.

A more complete introduction to this series is contained in the first book, Edgar Cayce Returns. In it, the nature of the mediumistic trance, the origins of this specific project, and the value of creative genius are discussed in detail. For information on ordering this first issue in the series, please see page 71 in this volume.

—Carl Japikse
ARIEL PRESS

SHAKESPEARE RETURNS

Drama often has to fight for its reputation. Some religious sects consider it immoral. Cromwell banned it. Censors constantly try to abridge it—when they aren't allowed to suppress it entirely. But the stage nonetheless continues to be one of the most important platforms of civilization. It is not just a vehicle for entertaining, but can also serve to inspire, educate, guide, and stimulate the masses of humanity—by providing easily-remembered object lessons which capture the heart of life at the same time that they fascinate the audience. The theater's usefulness, therefore, frequently transcends by far the hour or two of action, suspense, and laughter that it provides.

A good murder mystery, for example, can help the audience develop an ability for analytical thinking—as everyone tries to figure out who committed the crime. Similarly, comedies often help us develop greater detachment and a new capacity for recognizing the humorous elements in our own mistakes in living.

And all forms of theater inject fresh perspectives, insights, and enthusiasm into our habits and beliefs, "stirring up" our humanity and livingness. Throughout life, we face the danger of becoming so stuck in our attitudes, habits, and convictions that we create a metaphoric prison whose bars prevent us from realizing our potential. The stale air of this subconscious dungeon can smother our spirit and stifle our joy in living. The proper kind of drama can be amazingly successful in challenging our old ways of living—usually far more successful than a preacher's sermon, a teacher's platitudes, or a friend's advice.

No thespian has ever fulfilled the promise of the theater quite as well as William Shakespeare. Shakespeare was a master at drawing people from all elements of society into his theater, and then provoking in them a greater understanding of life while at the same time entertaining them royally. His tragedies inspired his audience to new appreciations of dignity, nobility, courage, and heroism. His history plays helped establish a sense of governmental continuity. His comedies confronted as many major themes of psychology and philosophy as his tragedies. And his metaphysical plays, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, introduced his audiences to an awareness of the invisible influences of life.

The merits of Shakespeare's contribution to literature, the theater, and civilization are of course well known. What is not so widely recognized is the more profound, esoteric significance of his work—and the model Shakespeare set for subsequent dramatists and writers. Shakespeare did not just write entertaining plays; he set styles, stimulated imaginations, broad-

ened the thinking of millions of people, and helped lift a good many of them—temporarily at least—out of the triviality of their mundane existences, by dazzling them with the possibilities of “a brave new world.”

Today, psychologists would describe this work as setting “role models,” touching archetypal themes, and raising the consciousness of the public. They might also point out that the educational impact of fiction and drama is often obscured by their heavy emphasis on propaganda. Nevertheless, even in these modern times, a persistent trickle of wisdom and inspiration does seep through the stage, television, and film portrayals of all good fiction.

Shakespeare’s contribution, of course, was more a deluge than a trickle. It has been the single most dominating force in English literature, manners, and culture for four hundred years. Understanding why this one individual was able to have such an impact on a major civilization should be a subject of great interest for all intelligent people—and surely for everyone curious about the creative process.

Creative giants of the stature of a William Shakespeare become focal points of civilization. Through them, bold new ideas, understandings, and perceptions are channeled from the inner, invisible dimensions of life into the outer forms of society and culture. For this reason, their creative work should not be seen merely as the outstanding efforts of talented individuals, but more as “cosmic missions” that benefit all of humanity and are directed from higher intelligence—the higher intelligence of the creative geniuses themselves, as well as other sources.

Few of these creative giants are consciously aware

during their lifetimes of the cosmic dimensions of their work. In most cases, they define their activities in very personal terms. Nevertheless, the universality of their contributions speaks for itself.

Shakespeare had very little idea, as a child, that he would become a writer. As a writer, he had only the dimmest notion that he would become famous or that he was participating in a mission of cosmic importance. His main conscious effort during his career was to produce plays that would be sufficiently entertaining and thought-provoking to draw in patrons. But now that he is in spirit, he can appreciate the breadth of his work, the role it played in infusing new themes and ideas into the culture of his day, and its continuing impact on succeeding generations. We, too, should make the effort to perceive this significance. It is immaterial that Shakespeare "borrowed" plots and settings from earlier writers. What counts is that he popularized a number of vital themes in such a meaningful way that he set a new pace for literature and language—and improved the reputation of the legitimate stage.

In the interview that follows, Shakespeare speaks to us with a recollection of the flavor and excitement of the Elizabethan era—and the joyfulness of his work. He talks about the contributions he made—how he cooperated with the Queen to set the tone of the age, and how he helped to standardize the English language and grammar, so that there would be a better framework for recording and preserving ideas.

He also comments on the creative process. Creativity, he indicates, is a process that often starts with an avid interest in people, their habits, and their lives,

but then is enriched with something extra. That extra ingredient—whether it is called imagination, inspiration, or insight—is a necessary component of creative genius. Without it, our efforts produce only imitations of creation—empty shells devoid of animating life.

Shakespeare's plays glow with the vivifying presence of inspiration. It is this extra ingredient that gives them lasting life, so that we are as intrigued and as entertained by them today in the twentieth century as his own countrymen were four hundred years ago.

Intuitive people recognize that inspiration is invoked by learning to tap our higher intelligence—and the higher intelligence of spirits such as Shakespeare himself. Thus, true creativity is really a form of psychic activity. Of course, it is highly doubtful that Shakespeare ever had, in his lifetime, the kind of experiences that are usually labeled "psychic." Great geniuses seldom hear voices or see visions—inspiration does not require that tiresome set of phenomena. Still, as he set to the task of creating a new play, his higher intelligence guided him and directed to his conscious mind the ideas and words he needed. His psychic perception was more subtle and refined than that of the usual variety of fortune teller, but it was nonetheless psychic. It is for this reason that Shakespeare's life and work was chosen for this series as a most appropriate example of psychic inspiration and genius.

As a spirit, Shakespeare is much more aware of the role of psychic inspiration in creativity than he was during his lifetime. He tells us, for example, that there are genuine "ghost writers" in the spirit world who assist physical writers. But creativity, he also mentions, is not invoked by merely waiting for

inspiration to strike us on the head. The vital spark of creativity can only be contacted when we have prepared ourselves to be an adequate channel for it, by developing our competence, by working hard, and by gaining experience. After all, many of Shakespeare's plays were worked out and modified in the course of numerous presentations. The versions that we know today are the end result of a lengthy creative process—not the instant product of clever inspiration.

At his own request, Shakespeare shared the spotlight in his interview with the Japanese dramatist Monzaemon Chikamatsu (in Japanese, it's Chikamatsu Monzaemon), who lived from 1653 to 1725. Chikamatsu's influence on Japanese theater equals Shakespeare's impact on English letters. It's said he wrote as many as 160 plays, mostly historical romances and domestic tragedies. Like Shakespeare, Chikamatsu was instrumental in enriching the significance of his language and in inspiring the citizens of his country. According to Shakespeare, these two great playwrights have gotten to know each other since becoming spirits, and now share many of the same goals regarding the advancement of human civilization and literature.

Chikamatsu wrote for *yoruri*, the Japanese puppet theater, although his plays have also been adapted for live performances in *kabuki*. These are highly symbolic theatrical forms in which the actors or puppets portray such elements as the wind, snow, and moon through the ritualistic gestures they make. To understand the full meaning of these dramas, the audience must be highly knowledgeable—another example of the theater stimulating the thinking and imagination of its audience. Indeed, the interview with Chikamatsu

indicates that it may be easier to describe the esoteric origins of creativity and the deeper implications of life in Japanese theater than in Western drama.

Also appearing briefly in this conversation is Queen Elizabeth I, who arranged the interview on the inner planes—just as it was her reign which arranged for the climate in which a Shakespeare (and many other great geniuses) could flourish. She briefly discusses her own attitudes and frustrations as a woman monarch.

In this interview, I ask most of the questions, but am joined from time to time by two friends who we will call Paul Winters and Ramona Dahlia, as well as Dave Johnson's wife, Colene. Ramona is an actress with a special interest in the works of Shakespeare. Shakespeare, Chikamatsu, and Queen Elizabeth I, of course, appear through the mediumship of my good friend, Dave Johnson.

The Queen is the first to appear.

Queen Elizabeth I: We're about to proceed; I hope you are ready for this.

Leichtman: We definitely are—it's a pleasure to see you again. Are you going to stay in for awhile?

Queen Elizabeth: Oh, I'll get my say a little later in the session, yes, but not at the moment.

[*The Queen exits.*]

Leichtman: Well, do come back. [*To Ramona*] You didn't recognize her?

Ramona: No.

Leichtman [*whispering*]: It was Queen Elizabeth—the Oneth.

[*Enter Shakespeare, taking over David's body.*]

Leichtman: Hello there.

[*Dr. Leichtman offers Shakespeare a cigaret.*]

Shakespeare: You know, I can remember when tobacco was introduced. There was a furor over it about as serious as the furor over marijuana in the present day. Many of us found it rather delightful, of course. I might ask to try one of your cigars later on; that would be something new for me.

I would rather not make an opening statement. And I'm afraid I won't be able to deliver my comments today in my own style.

Leichtman: Yes. I understand.

Shakespeare: Even though the Lump [Mr. Johnson] likes puns nearly as much as I did.

Leichtman: Would you like some questions, then?

Shakespeare: Oh, whatever.

Leichtman: Well, I could begin in various places. Let me see what I have here. Do you want the heavy stuff now or the light stuff?

Shakespeare: Oh, suit yourself. Since you've already gotten into the heavy stuff...

Leichtman: Ha!

Shakespeare: No fair hitting a spook!

Leichtman: You mean that figuratively, of course, and not literally, I presume.

Shakespeare: I mean it literally figuratively.

Leichtman: Okay. Would you care to make a statement about the minor and perhaps ridiculous controversy concerning Francis Bacon and the authorship of your plays? Just for the record, of course.

Shakespeare: I wrote my own plays. I can even remember the writer's cramp I got from it! In those days, of course, we didn't have modern typewriters. I did discuss ideas for my plays with various people and

they were helpful in the formation of certain themes. This is true of many authors.

As a matter of fact, there are still four plays that have not been discovered—they were hidden away. That's a puzzle I would like to get into somewhat later on. But when these come to light, it's going to be very obvious who wrote them.

Leichtman: Good. Do they happen to be in the original manuscript form?

Shakespeare: Yes.

Leichtman: Oh, very good. So we will have your style, your handwriting—

Shakespeare: And my fingerprints!

Leichtman: Very good! That'd be highly important to have.

Shakespeare: As you know, with your modern technology the comparison of fingerprints has become a rather important way of identifying *objets d'art* like sculpture, but it's also been used for identifying manuscripts in cases where the fingerprints are still preserved.

Leichtman: Were there some manuscripts that are not known today but have been destroyed? Are there other plays that will never surface?

Shakespeare: There were a few that I destroyed. After production, I decided that they were really not worthwhile. The original version of *Romeo and Juliet* was very bad, I thought. I burned it after rewriting it. But this, of course, is the artist's prerogative.

Richard the Second was rather a headache to write, and if I recall properly, I burned two or three versions of it.

There are also three plays that are not exactly

lost—they are attributed to another playwright of that period. They are not thought to be my work because nowadays they are considered to be “lesser” plays. I will tell you why. I wrote them for a marionette theater; they were done on commission. They wanted something light and frothy and I needed the money. I wrote “under” my style in these three plays. Doing this work made it possible for me to then write for the same marionette company *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Julius Caesar*.

Leichtman: These were originally written for puppets?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes. And I must confess that the grandest Puck ever in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was the original one—the wooden one.

Many of my plays that were not originally written for marionette were eventually performed by this one marionette company as well. And we found many dramatic ideas in watching the marionettes, because they performed indoors with candlelight rather than outdoors and achieved some dramatic effects that we were not able to. So, we altered some of our ideas in this way.

And then there was an aspect of many of the plays that is not often thought about—interludes that you would consider *divertissement*. These never got written down, either, because how would you write down a dance sequence? The plays were frequently quite extensive. Depending on the time of the year and the holiday at hand, we would add in *divertissement* as we could.

Leichtman: Were there ever any plays that had to be so censored that you had to drop them? Was cen-

sorship a serious problem in those days? I ask this because I recall seeing some amended notes by a censor that prohibited production of certain phrases "by your peril," which at that time meant something very dire—like death.

Shakespeare: Oh, yes. [*Laughing.*] My friend Chikamatsu was even more hampered by censorship than I, although of a different sort. This is something he would like to talk about.

Any playwright is somewhat hampered by censorship. I notice in the theater nowadays it seems to be less apparent, because there are more frank dealings with bodily functions than were allowed in my day, but even so, modern plays are censored in other ways that are not apparent.

All through the history of mankind, censorship has always *appeared* to protect public morals, but censorship has always been aimed at something else. It's always political.

Leichtman: This is what I understood the real censorship of your day to be.

Shakespeare: Not only in my day, but even in the present day.

Leichtman: Oh, yes. While we're on this subject, would you comment on the role of the theater in your time as a vehicle for educating the masses, either in humanities or in history? Did you simply use the chronicles of the recent past for plots, or was there a deeper reason than that?

Shakespeare: One of the reasons for writing the so-called history plays was to bolster up Her Majesty's position. I was commissioned by the court to do this, in a way. You would probably call this a kind of

political propaganda nowadays, but bear in mind that the Queen had a rather difficult role in a difficult time, far before the ideas of Women's Liberation.

I was happy to write those plays for that purpose, because after all, the Queen had created an atmosphere that made my work possible. It may be difficult, perhaps, for Americans to understand that people living under that particular monarch were very proud of the head of state. But we were, and we commoners were very happy to contribute to the well-being of the monarchy in whatever way we could. I suppose this kind of feeling can be seen in the films of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and the reaction of the common people to seeing her.

It may surprise people that I know about Queen Victoria, but I do.

Leichtman: Under King James, I suppose, you had even greater royal recognition and financial support. Did you find it easier to work during his reign?

Shakespeare: His reign was not as enlightened as Elizabeth's, and in a way this made it much more difficult. We did receive support, but that particular reign was more interested in what you might nowadays call "blood and thunder"—plays that had more of an immediate impact upon an audience and less cultural content. The style in which I wrote under Elizabeth became more rare under James. Playwrights became more interested in presenting something exciting, something a little more suggestive, and something a little easier to follow. That's what drew in the theater patrons under James.

In modern times, I know that people find my dialogue difficult to follow. They should keep in mind

that English as it was spoken in my time, English as it is spoken at present, and American English are rather far apart. Modes of speech have changed with the times. After all, when I began my career, the mark of an intelligent man was being able to spell his name ten or fifteen different ways!

Indeed, it was part of my work—and I must say that I was encouraged a bit by patronage—to standardize spelling and grammar. That's why you can recognize it now. My friend Chikamatsu had the same task given to him; almost every civilized country has had to "appoint" someone to do this particular piece of work. After all, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, language was in a state of chaos in comparison to your modern—dare I say scientific—grammar. Had it not been for people such as me in English letters, it would be very difficult for an English-speaking scientist to write a technical paper about a scientific event. Language in my day—at the beginning of my career, anyway—was very un-specific. It was much more poetic than modern English, more akin to what is today commonly thought of as the Oriental approach to language, where the references are allusive and associative, rather than specific. You might say Oriental languages express an idea by "surrounding" it, rather than pinpointing it. Many Oriental countries even now have difficulty handling scientific ideas in their literature because of this.

Leichtman: Did this endeavor also include some regulation of pronunciation?

Shakespeare: Yes, and this is why it was thought best to do my work in a theatrical form—so it would help standardize the pronunciation. Now, this was not

an effort that I was alone in—there were many people working on it.

Some of the plays were intended to be instructional in nature. Several of us worked over the ideas for the spelling, the grammar, and the pronunciation before the plays were ever produced—or published, as the case may be. Even in the theater now, there is this instructional aspect. Of course, your theater reaches more people than my theater did, and is more varied and subtle—sometimes even more sneaky.

Leichtman: How did you come by the idea that it was your work to add to the English language?

Shakespeare: It wasn't merely my idea—it's not something that entered into my head in that way. I was part of an intellectual movement that was growing at that time, and I was in a position where I could be more effective than other people in developing a mass awareness of grammar, spelling, and the like. Of course, we didn't give spelling lessons on stage!

There were writings by other people at that time that set spelling and grammar, too. We frequently got together and discussed some of the problems over what you would call a tipsy evening, but this is the way things like that were handled—and still are.

Leichtman: That brings to mind: did you collaborate often with other playwrights? Did you often get together and exchange shoptalk?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes—any writer does this. I was privileged to have as acquaintances people of great wit and intelligence. They did influence my ideas, and I influenced theirs. I might say here that perhaps I influenced Bacon a few times, too. But I didn't write any of his material—any more than he wrote mine.

Leichtman: That's good to hear—I had worried about that. [*Laughter.*] I asked that question because there was a problem in those days, was there not, with the lack of copyright laws and protection? Wasn't there occasional pirating of scripts?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes, and that used to be great fun, as a matter of fact. Being one who enjoyed adventures—sometimes even squabbles with people—it was at times great fun to steal a scene from someone else's play.

Leichtman: Indeed, is there some confusion today because the earliest printed versions of some of your plays were really pirated versions, rather than the "pure" versions?

Shakespeare: Well, even up to the period of the Booths in your recent history, my plays were revised rather freely by whatever company was performing them. Actually, this is still true—whole scenes are frequently cut. This is all right, as long as the idea remains intact. For some audiences, it's a good idea. We did it ourselves in fact—we added and cut, depending upon the times and even the conditions of the weather and the temper of the audience.

Leichtman: The original printed versions of your plays included virtually no stage directions and divisions of scenes and acts. Have modern producers done a fairly honorable job of interpreting these elements?

Shakespeare: We were just doing something that is now considered to be very modern. Owing to the nature of our stage structure, we performed non-stop—that is, we did not stop for acts. Once again, this has become the rule rather than the exception—at least, that's what I've seen in taking a peek at your

movies. Very seldom are there even intermissions. In my day, we could not afford intermissions, because frequently there would be fist-fights in the stalls. We shared this type of problem with the circuses (and there *were* circuses of a sort then), where the crowd sometimes gets very rowdy. When that happens, the circus usually breaks out in loud music and the clowns come out. We always had to be ready for this problem, too. We had emergency scenes—

[*General laughter.*]

Well, our style of performance was influenced somewhat by the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, which had not become terribly popular in England but which many of us were familiar with. And so we had the equivalent of the *lazzi*—a character in Italian comedy who would come in if a scene got overlong. You see, the actors were good enough and had worked together enough that they would frequently extend a scene if they were getting a reaction from the audience. We had to have someone in the cast who could end the scene if the actors lost the audience or the continuity of the play.

Many of the plays played considerably longer than the versions you have of them now. Depending on the conditions and temper of the audience, sometimes we would extend them, sometimes shorten them.

Leichtman: Fancy that.

Shakespeare: Theater in those days was very rough and ready. [*Laughter.*]

Leichtman: And of course you weren't forced to stop so the popcorn vendor could make his pennies.

Shakespeare: Well, we had orange vendors, and sweetmeat vendors...and sweet skin vendors. [*Much*

laughter.] The actors did have to compete with *those* people, and they were more of a problem than popcorn vendors are nowadays. I remember that on numerous occasions we were inundated with ladies of the evening who were so noisy that the actors could not be *heard*. Of course, this was part of the fun of going to the theater in those days. And there were also times when some of the ladies on *stage* would be hawking their wares. This is why, incidentally, we would frequently cast a boy in a female role. At least it kept things in some kind of perspective. Actresses often got carried away. As I understand it, they still do sometimes.

In a way, it was a much more lively period—much more rough and ready—for the arts and the culture then. Nowadays, the Western tradition is a rich source for drama in your culture, and you seem to like the rough and ready quality of those stories. The West was the frontier in your culture; well, we had a “frontier” in our culture, too, but of a different sort. And whenever there’s a push toward the frontier in a culture, there’s always going to be that rough and ready attitude.

It’s been said that the main invention of the renaissance was the natural child. [*Laughter.*] I suppose this is true in a very superficial sort of way.

Ramona: You mentioned the “two hours’ traffic of our stage” in the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*. Was that the actual length of your plays?

Shakespeare: I preferred the two-hour traffic, but there were many times when we extended a play quite a bit longer, due to the audience and the inspiration of the actors. We gave actors much more latitude then.

Ramona: Wasn't the speech faster and less stilted—or "British"—than it is now?

Shakespeare: Yes. Nowadays you speak our English very carefully because it's unfamiliar to your ears. We were speaking in a manner that was a little more formal than was commonly used, but the speech was within the grasp of most of the people in the audience. Flowery sentences were the style then.

Leichtman: Of course, you shifted the style a great deal to indicate the mood or intent of the speaker. I suppose it was very important to do that, because you didn't have stage lighting and music and all the stuff we have nowadays.

Shakespeare: Oh, we did have stage lighting. Of course, most of the time we had to perform in daylight, but we did have various ways of getting light effects with torches and lanterns and the like. And as I got older, we became more skillful in creating rather dramatic effects—particularly in the murder plots—and that helped us hold our audiences better. I know that some scholars have made remarks about slight differences in my works as I grew older; that was because we grew more interested in getting the audience where we wanted them, if you'll let me put it that way. We were more interested in getting their attention.

I can remember a particular performance of *Hamlet*; Ophelia was being played by a very serious actress. She captured the audience so well that even the illiterate orange hawkers were moved to tears at her drowning. Moving the audience in that kind of way became more important to the troupe of actors as we matured, and this is reflected in the plays themselves.

That actress, I might add, did a very profound job of portraying Ophelia. Unfortunately, she did much of it extemporaneously, and no one got it written down. Some of it, I must say, was better than the written version.

I suppose you know that I acted some myself. Acting in my day was in some ways more like being a circus performer than an actor as you know it. We had no method. Our only desire was to present a play so that people could *hear* us. The stage directions in my plays are at a bare minimum. Our motions were a bit more pronounced than is the custom now; they would seem overly stylized. The modern *kabuki* theater [in Japan] is a style of acting which is similar to what we did. Today's Shakespearean actors use a more naturalistic motion but a stiffer sort of speech than we did.

Leichtman: How popular was the theater in those days?

Shakespeare: Oh, it was very popular among certain types of people. It was this period which gave rise to the idea of "life upon the wicked stage," after all. Many people went to the theater to make a date for the evening—hopefully with an actress and if not, then with a lady in the audience. Many of the court attended, but more for the purpose of liaisons than to see the play. Actually, the audience was almost as entertaining as the actors. It would be difficult to give you a full picture of the cacaphony of the theater of my time; everyone was enjoying himself. We always served food and drink, and everybody had a very, very good time. It was almost like a county fair, in a way.

Leichtman: You mean you didn't have it in your

union contract that the audience must be still and not eat during the performance? [*Laughter.*]

Shakespeare: Somehow, we managed without unions. At times we had to hang on by our fingernails, and were lucky to do so. It was a very exciting time, and I'm glad I lived through it. There were times when I didn't think I was going to. Actors in those days really led a hand-to-mouth existence.

I know, Doctor, that you sometimes look down your nose at actors. But you've never acted, and you have no idea of the excitement of presenting a play—before the audience and behind the scenes. And I might tell you, young lady, that behind the scenes the action was even more bawdy than it is in modern theater. [*Laughter.*] One never knew when one's dressing room was going to be hired by a duke to entertain a lady friend for what you would call a "quickie"—and we would call something similar. [*More laughter and guffawing.*] And there were times when one would barge into one's dressing room to make a change while the duke and his lady were doing it. Not infrequently, the actors would join in and miss their cues! [*Laughter.*]

Paul: The Doctor and I were talking on the way down here, and he said that instead of writing a play and then finding a troupe to do it, you would create characters that fit the people in your own troupe—

Leichtman: You worked with a company.

Shakespeare: Yes. The company was very much set. We did have to make some alterations: a few of the plays were done with women who were then replaced with young men because of certain conduct that had to be censured.

We were very versatile—there were occasionally plays that had many female roles in them and we would cast both women and young men, just to cover all the parts. And many of us would have to play two or three characters in a play and change clothing on a dead run. Bear in mind that clothing in those days was rather more difficult to change—we did not have the convenient buttons, zippers, and hooks that you have now. Almost everything was laced together. Frequently we had to hire dressers or dress each other. Of course, even nowadays one sometimes has to sacrifice something of modesty in the dressing room in order to be able to make a scene on time. Then as now, this does tend to draw actors together as a group—they become more of a family, really.

Leichtman: So then, because you might have had a slender, tall and quietly reserved actor in your group, you had to write in a part like Iago or Cassius—

Shakespeare: Or even Katharine in *Henry the Fifth*. That was especially tailored for one of our actors who, as a matter of fact, did such a beautiful job of being Katharine that he used to laugh about the *billets-doux* that he got after the performance. We had to do a curtain call in which he came out and removed his wig just so he could save face. You see, he was a married man. [*Laughing and guffawing.*] And while some of the young actors could accept those things, this particular one did not.

Leichtman: I see.

Shakespeare: Times haven't changed so drastically, after all.

Leichtman: Would you care to speculate on how you might have written certain plays differently if you

had not needed to fit them into the mold of your company of players?

Shakespeare: When all is said and done, the putting down of my plays—and I must say it this way—was much fun, and I'm glad that even in my own lifetime many of them were considered to be profound. Of course, the plots weren't terribly original—sometimes we had to do a play in a hurry and we took whatever plot came to mind. But all of my plays were done many, many times before we had a final written version of them. This is perhaps one of the reasons why they are living literature, because they were done and polished, done and polished. I have no regrets about tailoring parts to actors. After all, history tends to tailor parts to people, you know. This was something that I knew at that time. Of course, we did change history here and there to make it better drama.

Leichtman: Do we have the historical sequence of the plays right—the order in which they were written and the dates?

Shakespeare: No.

Leichtman: I didn't think so.

Shakespeare: They were not written in the commonly-accepted historical order and were in fact not in final versions for many years. This is where many of the researchers are thrown off: an individual play might have been performed *here* and then polished up and written down *there*.

It's rather difficult even to say what year any one play was written, because there were always several being performed at any point in time in one version or another. They were added to, and taken from, and changed.

Leichtman: So actually your plays continued to evolve during your life.

Shakespeare: Well, to my way of thinking, theater should be a living thing. To go back to my comment about the liberties that people have taken with my plays, I think this is fine: it does tend to keep them living. If one can update *Hamlet* in certain ways, for example, then the play will be something new every time an audience sees it. I don't even mind the version of *Hamlet*, incidentally, in which Hamlet is revealed in the end to be a woman. [*Laughter.*] It's a rather interesting idea—I wish I had thought of it myself.

Leichtman: How about staging your plays in modern language and dress?

Shakespeare: Why not? Let me draw an analogy from medieval painting, which I was interested in but only had a nominal acquaintance with. In medieval painting, scenes from the Bible were often portrayed in contemporary dress and European settings—to make them more living and immediate.

Leichtman: That's reasonable.

Shakespeare: The arts can do this, whereas history cannot.

Leichtman: In your day, was the theater consciously used to instruct the people as well as entertain them? I refer to instruction not so much in language, which we've already talked about, but in terms of history and the humanities.

Shakespeare: Yes. Ever since there has been theater, theater has been a tool for instructing the masses. It's always been this way: even in the most ancient times, temples performed dramas to instruct people about their own religion and history.

Leichtman: Particularly the Greeks.

Shakespeare: Or the ancient Egyptians. Even the Atlanteans. I'm getting some advice over here [from other spirits] on some of these facts.

Incidentally, young lady, did you know that marionettes are called marionettes because that particular type of puppet was developed to put on Nativity pageants in cathedrals? In fact, all creche figures are technically marionettes.

Ramona: That's interesting.

Shakespeare: Creche scenes were at one time done with stringéd figures.

Leichtman [*laughing*]: Stringéd figures — very good.

Shakespeare: And of course, "marionette" means little bitty Mary, Mother of God. I wish a few more puppeteers would think of that, although the puppeteers I knew in my day were perhaps more respectful of the theater than the actors were. And a little less temperamental, I might add.

Ramona: Getting back to what you said about the boys and the actresses, were the roles like Rosalind [in *As You Like It*] and Viola [in *Twelfth Night*] originally played by women, before you put young men in to play them?

Shakespeare: No, Rosalind and Viola were always boys.

Ramona: Always boys.

Shakespeare: We used to have alternative endings in which they were revealed to be boys.

Ramona: Ahh. Scholars now consider the role of Rosalind to be the actresses' equivalent to Hamlet. Is your view of Rosalind similar?

Shakespeare: No, the female roles I was happiest with were the three women in *Lear*. Those three were the most challenging to put together. We cast three very mature actresses for those roles, and they contributed a great deal to the parts through the depth of their understanding.

Now, we had our ingenues and the classic problems one has with ingenues, but some of our actresses—particularly the mature ones—were very literate women. Even the women who played the role of Columbine in *commedia dell'arte* frequently had what amounts to a Ph.D. now. The theater was one of the areas, before the days of the equality of women, where the women could be educated and literate. We were blessed with several excellent actresses.

Ramona: Talking about actresses, how about Sarah Bernhardt's *Hamlet*?

Shakespeare: Believe it or not, I watched performances of that, and was very intrigued with it.

Hamlet is very interesting. The original discussion that gave rise to that play was a somewhat metaphysical conversation about the male and female nature of the human being. Of course, as the play evolved, it became more complicated because we saw more ramifications to the character. That was sheer joy to put together.

Ramona: Have we overblown the importance of one play, like *Hamlet*?

Shakespeare: If one play speaks to your time more than another, then perhaps it should be performed in your time more than the others. I don't think *Antony and Cleopatra* could compete with some of the movie versions of the present time...[*much laughter*]...be-

cause of the times. And my Cleopatra was not nearly as historical: She couldn't have been; we didn't know that much about Cleopatra.

We have a little problem; are we at a point where we could stop briefly?

Leichtman: Yes. [*The participants took a short break. Before Shakespeare returned, Queen Elizabeth stepped back in briefly and had been chatting with us a bit before we began taping once more.*]

Leichtman: She sounds like the computer on *Star Trek*. [Laughter.]

Queen Elizabeth: I don't either. I don't say, "Punch the buttons, Paul." [*More laughter.*]

Leichtman: She watches it, too, you see.

Queen Elizabeth [*imperiously*]: I directed it.

Leichtman: Of course. And probably *Night Gallery*, too.

[*Exit Queen Elizabeth; enter Shakespeare.*]

Shakespeare: No, I do *Night Gallery*.

Leichtman: Oh! Very good. While we're on that—perhaps it's out of context, but it comes to mind—are you busy nowadays guiding along certain writers or dramatists?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes. You don't think I'm sitting over here on the inner planes twiddling my thumbs, do you?

Leichtman [*joking*]: I know you do typewriter commercials. [*Much laughter.*]

Shakespeare: I'm quite seriously working with Rod Serling and some other people, particularly some of your favorite science fiction authors.

Leichtman: Oh, excellent.

Shakespeare: I don't want to mention their names

for the record, but you can add up the dots here. They're the more serious ones.

Leichtman: That brings up something: I wanted to ask you about the role of modern fiction as a device for teaching metaphysics or occultism—or simply the true facts of life.

Shakespeare: Well, when I did my major work, the theater was the only vehicle it was possible to use, due to the general illiteracy. Nowadays, with mass literacy—and I shudder at the thought of saying “mass literacy”—it's much easier to reach a wider group of people. I'm shuddering at the term “mass literacy” because even though it seems that people are taught how to read in this day and age, they don't really do so. Perhaps this is the fault of the educational system, at least in America, but merely being able to read doesn't make one literate.

A fictional framework for presenting ideas is often more appropriate than a factual one, because not only can you teach the facts involved, but you can also convey the emotional coloration of the experience. And you can do it more fluently and effectively than in an expository or a scientific style, and reach more people. After all, an understanding of the true nature of life is rather more emotional than it is scientific, and an expository style just can't do justice to it much of the time. I don't mean “emotional” in the hysterical sense; inner realization is something, as you know, that is dependent upon the feeling side of the being, rather than the intellectual side.

This is why I am working particularly with science fiction writers at the moment.

I know you're very curious about the creative

process—many people are. I think this is why there's such curiosity about who really wrote my plays. To tell you the truth, they almost wrote themselves. The ideas came so clearly and so completely—not only to my mind but to the company's mind as well—that a play would almost write itself once we started working on it. This is hard to explain; any creative person would have difficulty explaining the process, but the ideas come almost full-blown. And once they have come, the only thing left to do is the mechanical part, and most creative people are almost unaware of doing the mechanics, they're so wrapped up in their inspiration. It's really a type of psychic experience, in your terminology.

I was not terribly scientific in my grasp of what you call the occult; my approach was more one of "knowing." People like actors and artists perhaps fall into this "knowingness" rather more easily than people like doctors and mathematicians, because artists and actors are more open to the vibrations of what's around them. That's not a very good explanation, but it's going to have to do. Artists and actors are more attuned to the world around them.

After all, we were very busy holding up the mirror to nature, as 'twere. [*Laughter.*]

I have alluded a bit to the bawdiness of the time and the bawdiness of the theater, but of course this is an important facet of life, too. It's almost inevitable that artistic people will be attuned to the bawdy elements of life as well as the rest. I know that all of us had great respect for the fact that we were given the sensitivity to capture *all of life* on the stage.

[*Chuckling.*] I suppose to the modern way of

thinking, it's not that we were bawdy—we were just “celebrating our celebration.” [*Laughter.*]

If we are in harmony with our expressive abilities—that which you call the inner nature, the inner being—we should be happy. We should be willing to play. And of course, the whole aspect of play, particularly in adults, is the faculty through which creative thinking comes. I don't mean to make this sound like something childish or anything of the sort; “play” is another word for experimentation—for leaving open doors so that ideas can come through. In modern times, there has been a codification of this in what you call “brainstorming”—the process of coming up with a new idea. In a way, this is how many of the plays came together; they were my writing, but contributions came from everyone involved—meaning the company.

Leichtman: What about writing, acting, and the legitimate stage as a form of magic?

Shakespeare: Any creative effort, any attempt to construct a tangible, physical reality from an idea, is a high form of magic. When one has a good company and a good play, then one can do magic. When you're able to take an audience in the palm of your hand and uplift it in some way or another, even if it's just a comedy and they go away laughing and in higher spirits, then you have actually performed magic. That's a very simple explanation of magic, but that's what it is. And even people who sit in their little closets doing magic with their grimoires and their wands find that they are most successful when they are being a little bit dramatic, a little bit theatrical.

Leichtman: Including the Madame Zenobias?

Shakespeare: The "Madame Zenobias" aren't capable of really performing magic.

Incidentally, the spell in *Macbeth* is an actual spell that still works. You know: "Double, double, toil and trouble, fire burn and cauldron bubble."

Leichtman [laughing]: Well, I'll have to try it out!

Shakespeare: Ah, but you don't know what it is for, and I'm not going to tell you!

Leichtman: Awww. [*Laughter.*] Would it kill the mice in my home?

Shakespeare: No, but you might suddenly be visited by Birnam Wood [a forest mentioned in *Macbeth*]. And how would you explain that to your landlady? [*Laughter.*]

Leichtman: Or my cat. [*Tittering.*] Were you formally aware of psychics, occultists, and astrologers in your day? In Elizabethan times, was this accepted, or was it feared as witchcraft?

Shakespeare: Well, of course, Her Majesty consulted with a Dr. Dee—you already know about this. [Dr. John Dee (1527-1608), an alchemist, astrologer, magician, geographer, and mathematician.]

Leichtman: Yes.

Shakespeare: Dr. Dee has been very much maligned in your time. I also consulted with Dr. Dee and was myself conversant with astrology and some related subjects. I know that scholars are finally discovering that I did know something about astrology. I did, of course, have some allusions to it in my plays.

Astrology and alchemy and kindred subjects were considered to be a learned man's occupation at that time; they were not parlor games. Rather, they were respectable, intellectual pursuits. I can remember

meetings of people—including Ben Jonson, who was conversant with astrology—on these subjects. We were not, however, practicing astrologers.

The Madame Zenobias of that time, on the other hand, were always demimonde and a bit suspect. Whenever there was a society poisoning, it was always thought well to look into the philtres of one of these women. And men—there were many charlatans in those days, too. Perhaps they were even more dangerous than today, because there weren't any groups like the American Medical Association to serve as protection. But even though history books tell you there was a clamp-down on occult practices by the church and the state, the atmosphere was really not as restrictive as it was in the early part of the twentieth century, for instance. That was a time when people in these studies were restricted far more than most people realize.

You might inform David that yes, I did know Dr. Frost [a spirit from the Elizabethan times who frequently worked with David on astrology and theatrical productions]. He came to us from a group of traveling actors. Traveling actors in those days performed more in the style of Italian comedy—improvisational theater. They were out for laughs and fun at county fairs and the like. Dr. Frost came to us rather late in life; he had been somewhat disgraced in his younger years. There was a scandal over a prediction he had made to Mary Tudor or someone around Mary Tudor. He had to decamp rather quickly and change his habitat.

When I met him, he was working for the marionette theater that I was writing for. Before that, he had

been traveling around the countryside. The marionette theater was housed in a permanent theater; they were presenting great tragedies. Dr. Frost made many of their marionettes and invented some of their stage effects. Among other things, he was also an excellent alchemist and could make a compound that would make a flash like flash powder does now. It wasn't Greek fire; it was a different compound, something the alchemists discovered.

Incidentally, the current view of alchemy is rather strange, but of course you've come through more than two hundred years of scientific process. In my day, alchemy was the only chemistry known. Much of the work of the alchemists of my time contributed to the basic knowledge of modern chemistry. It was a rather serious endeavor engaged in by intelligent people.

I was very impressed by Dr. Frost's many talents. He was our greatest Lear on stage because he could invoke a kind of holy madness that no one else in the whole company could quite match. He also gave us many, many important stage effects.

Leichtman: Fascinating.

Shakespeare: We had a way of doing *Hamlet* that you would have found very interesting; we lowered the ghost on a wire and dipped his clothes in phosphorous and performed in the evenings. It was quite frightening, and indeed, the first time we tried this particular technique, we were arrested for calling up a real ghost! We had to demonstrate to several judges that it was only phosphorous and not a real ghost. [*Laughter.*] In fact, the way we finally proved our case was by taking one of the officials of the court and putting him through the whole procedure himself.

Let me tell you, the prisons of those days were very, very uncomfortable. We all worried a bit about winding up on the end of a rope with slightly more fatal results than a stage effect. But fortunately, one of the judges was very interested in going to the theater, so we did get the benefit of the doubt.

Leichtman: Ben Jonson wasn't quite so fortunate at times.

Shakespeare: Well, I was in and out when I was younger for minor offenses. My attitude was that life was too short not to have fun, which after all, is proper for a young man—or a young woman, too, for that matter. Where would young men be without young women?

Leichtman: I must ask this question: you have not reincarnated since your life as William Shakespeare, have you?

Shakespeare: Yes, I did, as a matter of fact, and within the twentieth century. I am not going to tell you the name, but I was a man who was very lucky and came from the English stage to Hollywood. I was fortunate enough to be responsible for the acquisition and training of superior actors in Hollywood. I made several movies and I died some time ago. I was very happy to have the honor to do that piece of work.

Leichtman: Very good. Very good.

Shakespeare: And I also managed to write some scenarios that I thought were quite good.

Leichtman: Dot, dot, dot, dot, dot. Okay.

Shakespeare: So you see, I'm still involved in modern theater in some ways. And more recently, working again from the inner planes, I have had something to do with the development of a few of the

plays that you call *Star Trek*. That was really pleasant to do. I didn't do all of them—just a few. There was one or two that I think I did a good job on. Incidentally—and it might shock him to learn this—but Mr. Roddenberry [Gene Roddenberry, the creator of *Star Trek*] is an excellent medium: a medium in the sense that any creative person is a medium. I did not write the scripts; I helped him.

And you might be interested to know, too, that Queen Elizabeth has had a great deal to do with inspiring Bette Davis's style of acting. Her famous gesture. When Miss Davis was portraying Queen Elizabeth, she was often overshadowed in the important parts. Maybe we will create a run on those movies again.

Leichtman: I hope so.

Shakespeare: It's interesting to know that there is a bottle of malmsey in the house; I remember questioning whether we should drown that one character [the Duke of Clarence in *Richard the Third*] in a butt of malmsey wine, because it was one of my favorites.

Leichtman: Pity to spoil the wine with—

Shakespeare: With the mechanism of the plot. Historically, that character was drowned in malmsey. So we had to do it, but we always substituted colored water. We were supplied for our performances with a butt of malmsey, but we switched it for colored water and drank the malmsey backstage, I must confess.

As a matter of fact, late in our career at the Globe we were quite liberally patronized by the court. We received cast-off clothing, for instance, that was rather more beautifully made than anything we could have made on our own.

Leichtman: Yes, I understand you went to great lengths, even though it was extremely expensive, to try to create a good facsimile of the real costumes for the royalty in the plays. I suppose it would be very useful to have cast-offs.

Shakespeare: Of course, doing someone like Cleopatra was a bit difficult, but we were given—not by the Queen, but by someone else—a gown to use. I suppose you could call it ‘Nile Green.’ I’m not sure just what it was, but it was a shimmering green material with pearls worked into it, and serpents. It had been designed for a rather important lady to wear to a costume affair, and then she presented it to us. Clothing in those days was made in such a way that you could not afford to wear it now. It was quite expensive and elaborately made; that dress lasted through almost forty years of performances, with minor mending. At times we had to hock the pearls and get paste because we needed the money. The lady never knew, but it was assumed that we would take the pearls and use them. There was never any question about it.

We were always being given presents of one sort or another that went into the company. At times, they kept us going. When times were not good, we had to live and eat in commune fashion in the back of the theater. And if you think dressing rooms are drafty now, you should have tried our dressing rooms in the middle of winter. [*Laughter.*]

Leichtman: You most often performed in open theaters or open courtyards, didn’t you?

Shakespeare: The Globe was like a courtyard, and many of the theaters we used, while designated as

theaters, were designed like courtyards. God only knows how we would've handled the riff-raff otherwise. [*Laughter.*] There were some experiments being made at the time, largely by the two or three marionette theaters in London, with a proscenium stage such as you are familiar with. Of course, the staging of marionettes almost demands such an arrangement.

We were involved in several pageant performances that employed more elaborate scenery than we ordinarily used. These scenes were constructed on wagons—more like a float than anything else. The float would draw up in front of the grandstand and one act of the play would take place, and then the float would go on and another wagon would roll up. I hate to tell you how many companies of actors had to get together to do those pageants. Each float had to have a duplicate set of actors on it.

Leichtman: In your day, there was a very rapid turnover of plays, wasn't there? You wouldn't perform the same play two days in a row.

Shakespeare: Oh, no—the object was to bring the same people back in the next day and surprise them. Of course, many of the plays we performed were rather bad plays and would be of interest only to a student of the period. We were trying to entertain the fashionable and the giddy, as many theater groups have to do. But we also did several plays that other people wrote that were not too bad.

Ramona: We haven't mentioned the songs that appear in your comedies. Did you enjoy writing them, or was this just a—

Shakespeare: I played a few instruments by ear and

enjoyed music. Sometimes there was a popular tune going around that I would write new lyrics for, to make it more appropriate to the play. Sometimes these got laughs; sometimes they did not.

I enjoyed everything I did.

Ramona: Have you enjoyed the operas and musicals that have been made from your plays?

Shakespeare: I'm very happy that these plays are living enough that they can be adapted to a musical format. Of course, liberties are taken with them, but this is all right. The work of any creative person ought to be living enough that it can be adapted in some way. Otherwise, there would be no famous art or letters—it couldn't find a place in modern times. I'm glad my work is finding meaning with new types of people.

Leichtman: I think some classical scholars are going to be offended to discover that apparently the real Shakespeare is not a purist. [*Laughter.*]

Shakespeare: The real Shakespeare is a man who learned the hard way that life is too precious to quibble with what happens to one's work. Part of the fun of doing the work was that it grew even during my lifetime. It was changed and altered and adapted, and that's why it grew.

Scholars are scholars and actors are actors. An actor has to be on his toes, and a scholar can only discuss and dissect. They both have their functions, of course. I'm glad there have been so many scholars who have kept busy with my work—here again, we have another adaptation. Another group of people has something to do. [*Laughter.*]

Leichtman: I want to inquire about the mystery of

your epitaph. Does the inscription on your tombstone* contain a mystery message? Is it some type of cipher which conveys a cryptic pronouncement, or were you merely playing a practical joke on your successors? And is this in any way related to your secreted manuscripts? Can these manuscripts be found through the help of the message on your tombstone?

Shakespeare: The mystery of the tombstone is very simple. That's why it's so "difficult" to interpret. One has to imagine an exact duplicate of the tombstone right next to it. Then the message is quite clear.

Leichtman: Do you mean that one should use a mirror image?

Shakespeare: No—an exact duplicate next to it.

Leichtman: Side by side?

Shakespeare: Yes!

Leichtman: That's it? [*Laughing.*]

Shakespeare: That's it!

Leichtman: But that's such a disappointment to me—and probably to others. I was expecting something much more sophisticated and complex of you. [*Pauses.*] But now that I think of it, it's sheer genius. The most clever way to hide a secret is to place it in a very conspicuous place where no one would think of looking.

Shakespeare: As a matter of fact, I gave Poe that idea, too.

* The epitaph on Shakespeare's tombstone reads:
Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear,
To dig the dust enclosed here!
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

Leichtman: You did? Very good!

Shakespeare: He used it in "The Purloined Letter." I had started to play with the theme, but I couldn't get it to work right. So I put it aside, and then I didn't get back to it.

Leichtman: What are you referring to now? Hiding a message within an epitaph?

Shakespeare: No, no. I was trying to write a play about someone who was in hiding but was in plain sight. I couldn't manage the theme the way I wanted to, and, unfortunately, I did not get back to it. That piece of manuscript is with the other papers that we hid.

I am not going to tell you the hiding place, by the way.

Leichtman: Could you tell us, at least, whether there is more than one manuscript?

Shakespeare: There is a pile of manuscripts about this thick [*holding Mr. Johnson's hands about one and a half feet apart*].

Leichtman: Are they all manuscripts of plays or sonnets or what? Did you write an autobiography? Diaries?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes, yes!

Leichtman: A little Elizabethan pornography? The secret secrets about all and everyone?

Shakespeare: There are several plays, some sonnets, and other items.

Leichtman: How did these writings come to be stored away? Did you just have a cache of manuscripts that you forgot about? Or did you have the deliberate intent of creating a mystery by concealing these papers?

Shakespeare: It was deliberate.

Leichtman: Are these manuscripts of plays that we are unaware of today? Or are they just early versions of some of your known works?

Shakespeare: These are entirely different than my published works.

Leichtman: Were some of these plays ever performed on the stage?

Shakespeare: One of them, but for a very small audience at the request of the Queen. She and I, having playful minds, decided on the epitaph as a means of guiding people to the hidden materials. We had fun doing it.

Leichtman: Yes, I can imagine. Is it still possible to recover them at this late date? Or is it your intention to have them stay "buried" for a few more centuries?

Shakespeare: No, I'm telling you this so that someone will find them now.

Leichtman: Are the hidden manuscripts in England?

Shakespeare: Yes, of course! They are in a landmark building that is still standing.

Leichtman: Would an Elizabethan scholar reasonably familiar with your work and habits be able to locate these materials without impossible odds against him? Or will it be more or less a coincidence if they are found?

Shakespeare: No, no. The message on the tombstone will tell them quite well where to look. The Queen and I thought that leaving a bit of puzzlement for the world would be our little joke. Someone who knew a great deal about me probably could find them

without the clue on the tombstone.

“The clue on the tombstone” is an expression that one could have some fun with.

Leichtman: I’m getting a visual image of a rather graphic simile—like a funny furred creature known as a “clew” gripping a tombstone with its claws. [*Laughter.*] It’s hovering over your tombstone like some giant bird perched there.

Shakespeare: I see. As I mentioned earlier, when these papers are found, that should put to rest the doubt about who wrote my plays.

Leichtman: You realize, I hope, that you can’t prove anything to a dedicated paranoid. Some people will probably claim that you only copied this material, and that these manuscripts are merely transcriptions. Paranoids always come up with elaborate theories like that.

Shakespeare: I had to search through David’s subconscious to find out what that word means.

Leichtman: What word?

Shakespeare: *Paranoid.* I have an understanding of it now.

Leichtman: It’s a person who is suspicious to the point of wretched excess—crazed in the intensity of his suspiciousness. You know the type. [*Snickering.*]

Shakespeare: As a matter of fact, I used to write about them—rather well, I thought. We did not have that word in my day, however, and I cannot find the term that we used in its stead. It isn’t in David’s subconscious.

Leichtman: Oh well, I suppose that it’s just old English for “nut case.” [*Laughter.*]

Ramona: Getting back to the subject of reincar-

nation, were you someone before you were William Shakespeare?

Shakespeare: Oh, many, many, many, many, many, many someones.

Ramona: One noted one, perhaps?

Shakespeare: No. Shakespeare and the most recent one were the only two noted lives. In the life immediately before William Shakespeare, I was an apprentice to an Italian alchemist, who was also not noted in history. I learned to read and write in Italian, which was not at all common.

Leichtman: Did you find this preparation helpful in your career as a dramatist?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes. The material in my plays that you would call "occult content" was very much dependent upon a kind of memory I had of having done it before.

One of the plays that is not lost but is hidden is called *The Alchemist*. It was one I enjoyed writing very much. Prospero is based on one of the characters in that particular play.

Leichtman: During your lifetime as William Shakespeare, were you aware of assistance from spirits when you wrote?

Shakespeare: Not *per se*. I was not aware of outside help; I just assumed it was inspiration. Imagination. These are the things that it takes to be a playwright. Actually, most artists are receiving help from the other side, but they tend to think of it in these terms.

Leichtman: It doesn't make too much difference, of course. It is after all, a natural part of the creative process.

Shakespeare: In fact, if I had openly admitted that I was talking to spirits, as you are doing, in my day I would probably have been burned at the stake. So ignorance at that time was a good safeguard.

Leichtman: It often surprises me that some people consider artists less creative and inspired if they occasionally accept assistance from a spook.

Shakespeare: Well, one of the spooks who assists is your own spirit. So it's really fair.

Leichtman: Exactly. If an author did some library research prior to writing about a historical epoch or visited a physical site such as Westminster Abbey to observe the ambience, then this would be considered a legitimate part of his preparation for writing. Accepting help from a spirit should fall into the same category.

Shakespeare: Yes. The important part of inspiration is what you do creatively with the ideas you've collected from your research and digging—and from spirits, too. As you know, two people can take the same ideas and produce two different pieces of art from them.

Leichtman: Of course. Two artists could take the same ten tubes of paint and come up with different paintings, even if they were painting the same landscape.

Shakespeare: I believe someone else said this in the course of these interviews: an idea is a piece of God looking for some place to go. The natural place for it to go is into the mind of an intelligent person. But until it's received and used, it's just floating around in the air.

Leichtman: I suppose ideas are like small intelli-

gences moving about.

Shakespeare: Actually, they are more like fragments of God's Mind in action. And we are put on earth to do something with these ideas because, in some ways, we are God's fingers. Now, I suppose that someone will read that and object to it very much, but most artists will agree with it. I am not just talking about people who paint; I am talking about the whole field of art. I'm referring even to the "art" of astrology and the "art" of cooking.

Leichtman: Our fingers are wands in that way—almost magical instruments which can create.

Shakespeare: Now that I think about it, you're right.

Leichtman: Could you comment on how you prepared yourself to work with ideas—your early education, formal and informal? You were not especially a classicist, as I understand it. You drew your insights and examples and illustrations from your own life, rather than from textbooks—is that not correct?

Shakespeare: Yes. But I did read a great deal, too. I also was privileged through most of my lifetime to know intelligent and literate people. I learned a great deal from them, as most people do. I drew morals from my own life, but the settings were derived from my reading. *Romeo and Juliet*, as most people know, was not an original idea, but an idea that I ran into. I decided that the poem that I read was not what it could be: *Romeo and Juliet* wound up living or something like that. I've forgotten. It was a poem written by a minor poet, and it did not develop all of the themes as I thought they could be developed. Of course, it's not improper for a playwright to take an old work and redo

it, or take a theme out of a play or a poem and rework it.

I must tell you about little Will, who was the first Juliet. [*Laughter.*] He was quite a heller, and the *billets-doux* and presents he got when he played Juliet quite turned his head and we had to get rid of him. He was a lively interlude in our troupe. Several people who were with us for awhile and then left nonetheless kept all of us laughing and happy with their liveliness.

We had rather less internal friction than many modern companies, because we knew we had to hang together or we'd starve to death. Times being what they were, we really had to hold on together for many years.

Leichtman: Then your compensation was by right of being part of the company?

Shakespeare: Oh, yes.

Leichtman: It was your business as well as a job.

Shakespeare: We had salaries when we had enough money for them, but when we didn't have enough money, everyone would pool resources.

I suppose, by and large, that it was really a rather rich way of life.

And having said that, I think it's time to let David up.

Leichtman: Well, it's been delightful to talk to you this way. I appreciate the time you have spent with us and your answers.

Shakespeare: It was my pleasure. Good by.

[*There followed an interlude for dining and drinking, after which the Japanese dramatist Monzaemon Chikamatsu came through to talk about his work and life.*]

Chikamatsu: This evening is my pleasure.

Leichtman: And it's our pleasure, too.

Chikamatsu: Shakespeare and I are the best friends now, although we obviously didn't know each other during our lives. We were contemporaries. Did you know that?

Leichtman: Yes. You lived a little bit beyond the time of Shakespeare, I believe, but yes.

Chikamatsu: David [Mr. Johnson] likes my plays almost better than he likes the plays of Shakespeare. And David loved Shakespeare at a very early age because he was introduced to Shakespeare through *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

I wrote stories about a "Robin Hood"—not *the* Robin Hood, but *a* Robin Hood—and I wrote stories about that Robin Hood's "Maid Marian," who was a lady of the evening.

Leichtman: Of course. [*Laughter.*]

Chikamatsu: But she was more than just a lady of the evening: she wrote beautiful poetry. She was a famous woman of the Yoshiwara district [a former red-light district in Tokyo], who was the girl friend of the Japanese Robin Hood. In Japanese folklore, she is almost more important than Robin Hood. She was a courtesan, and courtesans in Japanese history were very important ladies. This was far, far before the time that women's liberation was ever thought of. These were women who were slaves of Yoshiwara.

When her Robin Hood was waiting for her, my heroine would come sailing down the *hanamichi*—the Flower Way—[the *hanamichi* is a runway extending into the audience in *kabuki* theater] on *geta* [shoes] this high—ten inches. [*He gestures with his hands.*]

Or more than that—I'm exaggerating a bit. She had shoes that had soles almost this high [*gesturing again*].

Leichtman: Well, your hands are a yard apart.

Chikamatsu: A yard apart?

Leichtman: Yes. Isn't that poetic, though?

Chikamatsu: Her hairdo was two yards above her scalp.

Leichtman: Good grief! That would make her top heavy.

Chikamatsu: Yes, and she came down a board this wide [*gesturing again*], and I'm speaking literally now. Six inches wide.

Leichtman: Good heavens! Six inches.

Chikamatsu: Six inches!

Leichtman: A poet and an acrobat, too.

Chikamatsu: She came walking down the *hanamichi*, the Flower Way, through the audience, talking to her boyfriend. After all, she was a courtesan and she had been out on a call. She came walking down the *hanamichi* like a full-rigged ship under sail in a storm. She was very drunk because she'd been at a party, after all.

Leichtman: Like us.

Chikamatsu: I'm very proud of this play; the chorus on the stage describes this woman walking like a full-rigged ship in a storm. As she walked, she repeated epic poetry which I must say I am glad I wrote, because I was very good at that.

The part has always been played by either a man or a puppet. Shakespeare mentioned his experiences writing for marionette theater. I never knew what marionettes were, but I knew what puppets were—elaborate puppets who could put up their hair with

mirrors, who could make every gesture that human beings can make, including opening and closing their hands. We had technology in my country, in Japan, which was not even known to an Englishman at that time.

Leichtman: There was no intercourse at all between the two cultures?

Chikamatsu [*in mock surprise*]: Oh, my dear sir!

Leichtman: That comment's rated "X."

Chikamatsu: My dear sir! [*Much laughing and guffawing.*] There was no intercourse allowed even between members of opposite classes.

Leichtman [*gasping*]: Good grief!

Chikamatsu: All of the plays that I wrote—all the classic dramas of Japanese theater—are plays that were written for puppets. The puppets I wrote for took three people to operate: one for the right arm and head, one for the left arm and the seat, and one for the feet.

Paul: How large were the puppets?

Chikamatsu: The female puppets were three feet tall; the male puppets were four feet tall.

Leichtman: Good heavens—male chauvinism?

Chikamatsu: Yes, of course! At that time. I must tell you this: Shakespeare wrote plays that were open-ended and adaptable, depending on audience reaction. My plays ran seventy-eight hours.

Leichtman: Far out! Non-stop?

Chikamatsu: Non-stop. With different actors, of course.

Leichtman: Not even pit stops for the audience?

Chikamatsu: Well, everybody got pit stops and food: *sushi* and *sashimi* [two Japanese delicacies].

And the actors even entertained their lady friends in their dressing rooms, because each scene had a different set of actors—when it got to live theater. But when we were staging the plays with puppets, the puppets could always be repainted and redressed in seconds. They were carved by a man who was schooled in the classic art. Those heads are still art treasures of Japan. They are as highly regarded by my people as the work of Praxiteles is in the Western culture.

Colene Johnson: What were they carved out of?

Chikamatsu: A funny kind of wood that you don't know in your culture. It was a very fine-grained wood, something very much like what you call balsa wood, but we did not know balsa wood in my time.

Leichtman: Very light then.

Chikamatsu: Very light and easily carved.

Colene: Have I ever possibly seen something carved from this type of wood?

Chikamatsu: You have. And if you would ask your husband to show you a real *benraku* puppet head, he could make two phone calls and show you one, because there is one within twenty-five miles of here. This is a head that was designed to be a beautiful woman, but within three seconds it could become a horrible monster. [*Snorts like a horrible monster.*] Because we loved our ghost stories.

Leichtman: Oh, really?

Chikamatsu: Yes.

Leichtman: Wonderful.

Chikamatsu: I, sir, was a Buddhist and a Shintoist. And the Buddhists and Shintoists have more of an idea of their ghosts as friends, relatives, and close

companions than the Christians do.

Leichtman: Oh, definitely.

Chikamatsu: And Christians learned a good deal of what they know about the afterlife from the Buddhists. Jesus Christ, bless His heart, bless His *Ming* [“*Ming*” means “luminosity”], went to India in His lifetime and learned a great deal about Buddha. Buddha was, of course, an Indian person who had a great effect upon Chinese and Japanese people—and enlightened Christian people in the twentieth century, I am happy to say. Lord Buddha and Lord Jesus are advocates of the same school, although the teachings come out of their mouths so much differently. Buddha’s teaching is kindness and compassion, and on the surface many people have interpreted Christ’s teachings as hellfire and damnation. But that is not what He really said. He really said: “Oh, my dear fellow man, cannot we be joyous? Cannot we be loving? Cannot we be together? Cannot we *be*? Cannot we—you, and I, and God—*be*? And cannot we be happy about that?”

Leichtman: Getting back to the Japanese theater, did your plays have the livingness, dynamism, and evolution that the Shakespearean stage had?

Chikamatsu: Ah, would that he could read Japanese! [*Tittering.*] Oh, my dear sir!

Leichtman: Was there the improvisation that we find in the Elizabethan stage?

Chikamatsu: Yes. As a matter of fact, even now *kabuki* is still a living theater form. Shakespearean theater is not quite so much so. *Kabuki* is a form in which the actor moves, not in the sense of representing real life, but presenting life in an “artificial” sense.

Now, bear in mind that I wrote for puppets; I didn't like writing for living actors, *because I could not stand living actors or actresses!* [*Much laughter.*] I could only stand writing for a puppet, which after all performs its part with great grace.

Leichtman: Was this done with music, too?

Chikamatsu: With music, of course. And poetry—Shakespeare and I always thought of poetry first. He was not quite able to tell you this this afternoon, but the poetry was always first.

Leichtman: In words—

Chikamatsu: Poetry in words and movement and music. Shakespeare wrote all of his plays in tune to harps and flutes and recorders. The word and music together. Shakespeare worked with a man who knew how to write music and I worked with many men who knew how to write music. After all, my culture was more musical than his at the time. But my dear friend Shakespeare and I always wrote to music; all of our performances were done to music. To both of us, dance was the calling of God to participate—the movement of an actor, the movement of a play was meant by both of us to represent a god. In my case I had many gods to think about; in his case, he had one god to think about. The movement, and the music, and the courtiers—

Do you know that the *samurai* used to come with their mistresses and spend four or five days watching one of my plays?

Leichtman: Marvelous.

Chikamatsu: And if you want to know what censorship is about, I was perhaps more a subject of censorship than Shakespeare. We could have done a

scene with a man and a woman making love on stage with no clothing on, but we could not criticize the government. I wrote history plays and Shakespeare wrote history plays; I could not use living actors and actresses—I used dolls. Toys. All of my life. I was not allowed to use living people upon the stage. He wrote for living people. He did write sometimes for marionettes, but I never even knew what a marionette was. If I'm not mistaken, the marionette was introduced in Japan in 1943.

Leichtman: That late?

Chikamatsu: And Japanese marionettes have already surpassed American and English marionettes twenty-five times, because the Japanese know the anatomy of the body between the neck and the pelvis.

The dolls that I wrote for, *ninjo joruri*—which means a “story for dolls”—had nothing between the neck and the pelvis except cloth. And yet the people that I worked with were so skillful that they could make that cloth dance, because that is part of our religion, different than the Christian religion.

Leichtman: Yes.

Chikamatsu: They could make them dance and move, and their costumes would move, to the point that when actors came into *kabuki*, they took my plays, which on the average lasted two and a half days—

Leichtman: Exhaustive.

Chikamatsu: We had to have seven casts of actors!

Leichtman: But no changes of audience?

Chikamatsu: No, except when they got bored or were entertaining their mistresses or paramours, or had plumbing problems, or food problems.

Paul: Or naps?

Chikamatsu: Or naps. Well, people walked in and out, both in my plays and Shakespeare's. And the beautiful part of it was that both of us were happy to write plays that are living things even now—they are still performed! With adaptations and with changes, yes, but they are plays so beautiful—we both hope—that they are still being performed with *meaning* to intelligent people.

Can you imagine a woman walking down a board in her stilts and her wig, being played by a man because women were forbid to play in the theater? Can you imagine writing a play in which you describe a woman as a full-rigged ship, a scene which is still being performed? That scene is the only scene of that play which is still performed in the twentieth century. I am so proud of this scene—the “forty-seven room inn.” It's still being performed in one version or another throughout the world—not just in Japan. It's a play about duty and the willingness of a person to kill himself or herself for honor.

In the twentieth century, it's now performed both in western and eastern dress. It's still alive, and that's important. To see a *noh* play in which an old lady can come onto a dance floor and dance with a man who she does not know and who does not know her, and suddenly become an eighteen-year-old girl—well, isn't that reality, really, when it comes down to it?

Both Shakespeare and I are happy to have written plays for our very different cultures that are alive and well in the world today. And also to have been responsible for the development of grammar and spelling.

You know, I set Japanese grammar.

Leichtman: You set Japanese grammar? All right.

Chikamatsu: I set Japanese grammar and literature all by myself. Now Shakespeare didn't have this honor; he was a member of a group who decided, "Well, you know, it's time to set our spelling." I set our pictographs, our word-pictures. In English, you have statements of what a mouse does. In Japanese, we only have pictures of references of pictures of poetry about mice—it was all so involved.

Before Shakespeare and me and a gentleman who did the same thing in Turkey at the same time, there was no set spelling or grammar. And all the grade school children who might read this book may think it's funny that grammar and spelling are important but they are.

Leichtman: Yes, I agree.

Chikamatsu: One cannot be scientific, one cannot be specific, one cannot be careful without spelling and grammar. [*There's laughter in the background, because Mr. Johnson is a notoriously poor speller.*]

Don't look at me that way; we're trying to teach David a little spelling.

But Shakespeare and I did not do the work of establishing spelling and grammar ourselves; we were part of the *drive* of our cultures to do this. And culture is what makes great people great: the drive of culture, the impetus of culture, the beauty of people working together. But what is it to be a part of humanity? It means making grammar, making culture, making beauty, and making history—and history is one of the most important things that humanity has ever had sense enough to codify and organize and put together.

Without history, where would any of you be?

Leichtman: We'd have to start from the beginning all over again.

Chikamatsu: From Adam and Eve. Or our Adam and Eve, who were the Sun Goddess and the God of Laughter.

Leichtman: Oh.

Chikamatsu: Didn't you know that?

Leichtman: No.

Chikamatsu: All of our drama is based on this legend, all of our grasp of history. Now, we have kept our history better than Western civilization. We have preserved aspects of our culture for two thousand years. And can you tell me anything in American culture that's even two hundred years old?

Leichtman: Not in American culture.

Chikamatsu: Not even English culture has been preserved as long as ours.

The Sun Goddess is the daughter of the God and Goddess of the universe, who rippled the pond and made the universe. Bear in mind that all Oriental religions are symbolic, as are all Occidental religions. Now, the Sun Goddess was trying to die of despair, and so she walked into her cave and shut the door. She sealed the door and wasn't ever going to come out and speak to anyone again. She locked herself in, and all the gods tried to get this lady out of her cave—after all, we need the sun. And the God of Humor came up, turned over a washtub, and tied his pants up so that he was obscene. He was naked in the lower half.

Leichtman: Good grief! [*Laughter.*]

Chikamatsu: And he danced and he laughed until the Sun Goddess also laughed and came out and

married him. And that's where our culture began.

Leichtman: Sounds X-rated. Very poetic.

Chikamatsu: The whole act of creation, after all—whether it's painting or drama or what have you—is the God Siva or any one of his counterparts reproducing the rhythms of the Universe (the vibrations, if you will) by his dance. And the Orientals appreciate this far more than the Occidentals. Even in acting, there is this quality of dance—in Ibsen's *A Doll House*, for example, you have Nora walking like this [*gesturing*]. In Oriental drama, the equivalent of Nora is a lady moving like this [*gesturing again*]. The movement becomes almost more important than the words—the movement honoring the God Siva and the Goddess Parvani, which is the female Siva. Siva, by the way, is not the god of destruction but the god of the creativity of the Universe—the force that is creativity, whether it's birth or a painting or a play or a piece of literature. It's a movement of a god, reproducing the vibrations of the Universe.

Leichtman: It would be the equivalent of Isis.

Chikamatsu: Yes, but remember that Isis is an Oriental goddess.

Leichtman: Really?

Chikamatsu: Yes. Your religion, sir, including the Christ, is based in Oriental thought: the dance of the Universe.

Kabuki and *benraku* are dance forms, basically, with lines added to make music. And the music and the movement of the play tenderly pay regards to the god of Creation, who also is the god of destruction, who in the Hindu religion is Siva but who is recognized in all religions as the god who dances through creation, who

acts through creation, and who creates through creation the rhythms of the Universe. Except for this dance, there would not be any $E = mc^2$.

Most of the gods in the pantheons of the world are based on the Eastern idea of the god of drama or the god of dance. The god Pan. The god Harlequin, who is a version of the god Pan. Fate, which is an aspect of the god Harlequin. Or, Fate, the god Siva or the goddess Parvani or the goddess Kali. Destruction, building on the ruins, dance, drama, the whole thing. Movement. Real religion has to be based on the god of movement or the goddess of movement. There are always two—Mother/Father God: He/She who reproduces all the vibrations of life in His/Her movements. Does that make sense?

Leichtman: Of course.

Chikamatsu: The dance, music, acting, painting, writing, rhythm, rhythm, rhythm.

Can we leave it at that? Shakespeare has asked me to say these things. And while we are talking about creativity as a psychic adventure, sir, we are talking about the god Siva moving, recreating, destroying, recreating, dancing. After all, the first drama was dance. I won't lose my billing. [*Laughter.*]

I would like to leave you with this. The first drama in man's history was always done with dolls, because dolls were always God. They were inanimate things that moved, and thus god-like. So why is it so uncommon that both Shakespeare and I and many, many other great writers who wrote for actors wrote first for dolls—which is to say, puppets? Do you know George Bernard Shaw wrote a piece about the beauty of having a puppet for an actor, because a puppet

would do his thing and then you could fold up his legs, wind up his strings, and put him away? And then he started talking about what a great idea it would be to have a mother-in-law who was a puppet! [*Laughter*].

My dears, I could go on indefinitely about the theater; for me, the theater was immensely complicated—and censored, yes—but also something very poetic and punny. Japanese, after all, is ninety percent puns. But not puns to be funny—puns to give double entendres. Both my friend Shakespeare and I regarded the pun as something important—not a joke, but a coloring of the language. A pun is something to be taken seriously and thought about. Oh, the word “sun” means so many things to me. It means only two things in English, but to me it means many, many things. Or take the word “moon”—I can think of a painting of a full moon, a woman’s face, and the lantern the woman is carrying. From that, I could write many verses comparing the moon, the woman’s face, the lantern, the night, femininity, and the cause of the Cosmos—all in one poem with five, seven, and five verses. And that’s what a pun is. To understand my friend Shakespeare, one has to appreciate the English pun, which is double meanings on one word.

In a way, Shakespeare and I were like double entendres. We lived the same kind of life at the same time; we set grammar and we set spelling, and we are still living playwrights. Isn’t that wonderful—that great people live at great times together, unknown to each other, but the times being what they are, they are much the same.

May I say goodnight now?

Leichtman: Yes. Thank you for coming.

Chikamatsu: Oh, thank you for being so understanding. I sometimes find that I cannot even express myself to my friends who are still continuing my drama.

Colene: Before you go, may we request that you do return?

Chikamatsu: Oh, may I?

Colene: Please do.

Chikamatsu: William would like to, too.

Colene: We would like that very much.

Chikamatsu: Now, wait just a minute: there's a lady who would like to come in.

[*Exit Chikamatsu; enter Queen Elizabeth I.*]

Queen Elizabeth: Well, I hope it has been a very informative evening.

Leichtman: Yes, it has.

Queen Elizabeth: If I have done nothing else, sir— or ma'am—

Leichtman: Yes.

Queen Elizabeth [*referring to Dr. Leichtman*]: He used to be my niece at one time. He that used to be she, when I knew her. You had a better figure then.

Leichtman: More cleavage. [*Laughter.*]

Queen Elizabeth: Less tummy. You had more cleavage than I. And you had a hidden talent for being soothing, which is not apparent now. [*Much laughter*].

Leichtman: May I hit a spook?

Queen Elizabeth: No, you may not! Certainly not a queen.

Leichtman: All right.

Queen Elizabeth: You came to me at seventeen when I was an old lady, and you cheered me up a great



QUEEN ELIZABETH I

deal because you had the knack at seventeen for making me feel beautiful. Which I wasn't—I was fat and encased in steel and encased in protocol. [*Laughter.*] Encased in England, encased in the future. Do you have any idea what a horrible responsibility that can be? Encased in the future? Encased in an old woman's body at that time, desiring very much a husband, desiring very much to be loved, cuddled, and have children. I never had children in my lifetime. I had great children of other sorts: I am so happy to be the monarch who gave rise to pageant, to English Renaissance, to Shakespeare, and much more. I hope you will recognize the fact of what I had to do at that time as a woman who was a monarch. I was the only one.

If there was ever one thing I did that I was proud of, it has been this evening.

Leichtman: Well, thank you.

Colene: Thank you very much.

Queen Elizabeth: Thank you. Do you have any idea how difficult it was to be encased in steel and ruffs and officiousness, when one wanted to be so much a woman? I would much rather have had babies and have been a housewife—and know who me mother was. I never knew. I never, ever knew. I had four mums. And all of you may hate your mothers and may resent what your mothers have done, but I never knew who me mother was. I never even knew who me father was. I also never knew who my real lover was.

It's awfully nice to come through a man who has a better figure than I ever did. [*Laughter.*] He does, you know—he has a much better figure than I ever did. But after all, if he ever gets to do half as much as

I did, bless his heart. Oh, bless his heart anyway.

My dears, I am very grateful for this evening and what has been said today, because I consider myself somewhat responsible. I didn't do it myself. I enjoyed the results at the time; I enjoy the results now. Thank you very much for being together this evening to make it possible.

Leichtman: Our pleasure.

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Shakespeare Returns

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So says the spirit of William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare Returns*, a conversation with Dr. Robert Leichtman, through the mediumship of D. Kendrick Johnson. Shakespeare also discusses the nature of Elizabethan life, the authorship of his plays, and the rough-and-ready life at the Globe Theater.

This interview is part of a series of conversations between Dr. Leichtman and the spirits of many famous geniuses and psychics—including Edgar Cayce, Thomas Jefferson, Arthur Ford, Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, H.P. Blavatsky, Nikola Tesla, and Charles W. Leadbeater. In all, twelve separate interviews are being published as part of the series, which is called *From Heaven to Earth*.

In this issue, Shakespeare shares the spotlight with Monzaemon Chikamatsu, the "Japanese Shakespeare," explaining that they have become close friends in the heaven worlds. Chikamatsu discusses the Oriental approach to drama and literature.

The illustration on the front cover is a fantasy of the spirits of Shakespeare and Chikamatsu "ghost-writing" a modern science fiction TV show, as though its principal character were a puppet. The artist is the medium, D. Kendrick Johnson. He drew his inspiration from several comments made by Shakespeare during the conversation.