

REMY BUMPPPO
think theatre

THE REAL THING

by Tom Stoppard

Remy Bumppo Theatre Company
November 15, 2006 to January 7, 2007

At Victory Gardens Greenhouse Theater

Study Guide

Compiled and Edited by Peter Davis & Nick Sandys

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A Short Biography of the Playwright



U of Texas (Harry Ransom Center)

Renowned for his rapier wit and innovative approach to stylistic experimentation, Tom Stoppard is considered by many to be one of the most important writers of our time. He was born Tomas Straussler in Zlin, Czechoslovakia, on July 3, 1937. In 1939, his family fled from Czechoslovakia, and the encroaching Nazis, to Singapore. Shortly before the Japanese invasion of Singapore in 1941, Stoppard, his mother, and his older brother Eugene were evacuated to Darjeeling, India; however, his father, Eugene Straussler, remained behind in Singapore and was killed. In 1946, his mother remarried British army officer Kenneth Stoppard, and the family settled in Bristol, England.

Stoppard began his writing career as a journalist with the *Western Daily Press*. He began to write television and radio plays, and by 1966 he had completed his smash hit stage play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, which won a Tony Award in 1968. He has gone on to write numerous hit plays, including *Dogg's Hamlet*, *Cahoot's Macbeth*; *The Real Inspector Hound*; *Hapgood* (performed by Remy Bumppo in 2001), *Arcadia* (performed by Remy Bumppo in 2004/5); and, of course, *The Real Thing*. He is also a respected screenwriter, having co-written the scripts for *Brazil* (two Academy Award nominations, including for Best Original Script), *Empire of the Sun* (six Academy Award nominations) and *Shakespeare in Love* (13 Academy Award nominations and seven wins, including for Best Picture and Best Original Script).

A Tom Stoppard Chronology

(From: <http://www.sondheimguide.com/Stoppard/chronology.html>)

- 1937 Tomas Straussler is born in Zlin, Czechoslovakia on July 3.
- 1939 When Nazis invade Czechoslovakia on March 14, the Straussler family escape to Singapore.
- 1942 Before the Japanese invasion of Singapore, Tomas, his mother, and brother are evacuated to India. His father is killed in the invasion.
- 1943 Tomas starts classes at an English-speaking school in Darjeeling, India.
- 1945 His mother marries Kenneth Stoppard, a British Army officer, in November.
- 1946 In February, the family moves to England, settling in Bristol, where Kenneth Stoppard adopts his two stepsons.
- 1946-1954 Tom Stoppard [TS] attends the Dolphin School, Nottinghamshire, and later, the Pocklington School, Yorkshire.
- 1954 TS chooses to skip university and becomes a cub reporter for the *Western Daily Press*, Bristol. He remains there for the next four years, writing theater and film criticism among other assignments.
- 1958 TS joins the *Bristol Evening World* as news reporter, feature writer, and theater and film critic.
- 1960-1961 TS quits the newspaper to write his first play, *Walk on the Water*, followed by *The Gamblers* and *The Stand-Ins*. He remains a freelance journalist for the next three years.
- 1962-1963 In September, TS becomes the theater critic for the *Scene*, London, using the pseudonym, William Boot.
- 1963 TS writes the unproduced television plays, *I Can't Give You Anything but Love, Baby* and *Funny Man*. A television adaptation of *Walk on the Water* is broadcast on British ITV in November.
- 1964 TS writes five episodes for the radio serial, *The Dales*, airing in January. The radio plays *The Dissolution of Dominic* and *"M" is for Moon Among Other Things* are broadcast in February and April, respectively. *This Way Out With Samuel Boot*, a ninety-minute play for television, is unproduced. Three short stories appear in the

- anthology, *Introduction 2: Stories by New Writers*. From March through October, TS participates in a Ford Foundation colloquium in Berlin. A revised version of *Walk on the Water* is performed (in German) at the Thalia Theatre, Hamburg, in August. While in Germany, TS writes a one-act play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear*.
- 1965 TS marries Jose Ingle, a nurse, in March. *A Paragraph for Mr. Blake*, a television adaptation of his short story "The Story," is broadcast in October. Another television play, *How Sir Dudley Lost the Empire*, is unproduced. In June, a two-act version of *The Gamblers* is staged at the University of Bristol.
- 1966 *If You're Glad, I'll Be Frank*, a radio play, is broadcast in February. The first of the seventy episodes written by TS for the radio serial *A Student's Diary* is broadcast in April. His first son, Oliver, is born on May 4. TS adaptation of Nicholas Bethell's translation of *Tango*, a play by Slawomir Mrozek, is produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre on May 25. The television play *A Separate Peace* is televised on August 22. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, revision of the earlier one-act play, is performed on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe on August 26. His first (and, so far, only) novel *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon* is published the same month.
- 1967 *Teeth*, a play for television, is televised in February. The National Theatre production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* opens at the Old Vic on April 11. Another play for television, *Another Moon Called Earth*, is televised in June. The radio play *Albert's Bridge* is broadcast on BBC Radio, winning the Prix Italia. The US premiere of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* opens on October 16 at the Alvin Theatre, transferring to the Eugene O'Neill Theatre on January 8, 1968. It wins the Tony Award for Best Play of the Year.
- 1968 *Enter a Free Man*, another revision of *Walk on the Water*, is produced at the St. Martin's Theatre, London, on March 28. *The Real Inspector Hound*, revision of his earlier one-act play *The Stand-Ins*, premieres at the Criterion Theatre, London on June 17. *Neutral Ground*, a play for television, is televised by Granada on December 11.
- 1969 Stage adaptations of his radio plays *Albert's Bridge* and *If You're Glad I'll Be Frank* are performed as a double-bill on the Fringe of the Edinburgh Festival on August 29. TS's second son, Barnaby is born on September 20.
- 1970 *Where Are They Now?*, a radio play, is broadcast on January 28. *The Engagement*, an adaptation and expansion of *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*, is televised by NBC in the US on March 8. It plays in cinemas in the UK later that year. *After Magritte* is first performed at the Green Banana Restaurant by the Ambiance Lunch-Hour Theatre Club on April 9. The first US production of *The Real*

- Inspector Hound* opens at Brown University, Providence RI, on August 2. First US production of *Enter a Free Man* opens at the Olney Theatre, Olney MD, on August 4. TS writes a screenplay loosely based on Brecht's *The Life of Galileo*. It remains unproduced.
- 1971 The one-act play, *Dogg's Our Pet*, opens at the Almost Free Theatre, London, in December.
- 1972 The National Theatre production of *Jumpers* opens on February 2 at the Old Vic. TS divorces Jose Ingle (separated since 1970), retains custody of their two sons, and marries Miriam Moore-Robinson on February 11. Their first son (Stoppard's third), William, is born on March 7. A double-bill of *The Real Inspector Hound* (NYC premiere) and *After Magritte* (US premiere) opens at Theatre Four on April 23. The same double-bill opens at the Shaw Theatre, London, on November 6. *Tom Stoppard Doesn't Know*, a self-interview, was broadcast on the BBC program "One Pair of Eyes" in July. *Artist Descending a Staircase*, a radio play, is broadcast on November 13. TS adapts *Galileo*, his unproduced screenplay, for the stage. It remains unproduced until 2004.
- 1973 TS's adaptation of Federico Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* opens at the Greenwich Theatre, London, on March 22. TS directs a production of Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday*, opening on April 18 at the Greenwich Theatre starring Lynn Redgrave.
- 1974 US premiere of *Jumpers* opens at the Kennedy Center, Washington, on February 18. Broadway production of *Jumpers* opens at the Billy Rose Theatre on April 22. The Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Travesties* opens at the Aldwych Theatre on June 10. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is revived at the Old Vic, London, on July 8. A fourth son, Edmund, is born on September 16. NYC premiere of *Enter a Free Man* opens at St. Clement's Church on December 14.
- 1975 *The Boundary*, a play for television written with Clive Exton, is televised live by the BBC on July 19. Broadway production of *Travesties* opens at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on October 30, winning the Tony Award for Best Play. The film of TS's screenplay of *The Romantic Englishwoman* is released. TS's television adaptation of Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* is televised by BBC-2 on December 31.
- 1976 The interrelated plays *Dirty Linen* and *New-Found-Land* are first performed at the Almost Free Theatre on April 6, transferring to the Arts Theatre, London, on June 16. This production plays the Kennedy Center in Washington later in the fall. In August, TS addresses a rally in Trafalgar Square, protesting the treatment of Soviet dissidents. *The (15 Minute) Dogg's Troup Hamlet* is first performed on the terraces of the National Theatre on August 24. The National Theatre revival of

Jumpers opens at the Lyttelton Theatre on September 21.

- 1977 The Broadway premiere of *Dirty Linen* and *New-Found-Land*, opens at the John Golden Theatre, NYC, on January 11. The New York Times publishes "Dirty Linen in Prague" on February 11 concerning repression in Czechoslovakia. TS travels to Moscow and Leningrad with a group from Amnesty International. He later visits Prague and meets with dissident playwright Vaclav Havel. The Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, a stage play with music by Andre Previn, is premiered at the Royal Festival Hall, London, on July 1. A play for television, *Professional Foul*, is televised by the BBC on September 24, winning the British Television Critics' Award for best play of 1977.
- 1978 TS is honored as a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire). The US television premiere of *Professional Foul* is presented by PBS on April 26. Rainer Werner Fassbinder's film of TS's screenplay *Despair* premieres at the Cannes Film Festival in May. A West End production of *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (with chamber orchestra) opens at the Mermaid Theatre on June 14. The US premiere of *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* is performed at the Kennedy Center, Washington DC in July. *Night and Day* premieres at the Phoenix Theatre, London on November 8.
- 1979 *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* is first performed at the University of Warwick, Coventry UK, on May 21, 1979; a London production opens in July. The National Theatre's production of *Undiscovered Country*, TS's adaptation of a play by Arthur Schnitzler, opens in June. In July, TS has four plays running simultaneously in London's West End. The first NYC performance of *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* opens at the Metropolitan Opera House, NYC, on July 30. The US premiere of *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* opens in Washington DC, in September and then opens at the 22 Steps Theatre, NYC, on October 3. The US premiere of *Night and Day* opens at the ANTA Theatre, NYC, on November 27, after tryouts at the Kennedy Center, Washington DC in October.
- 1980 The film of TS's screenplay of *The Human Factor* is released.
- 1981 The US premiere of *Undiscovered Country* is performed by the Hartford Stage Company in Hartford CT in February, transferring to the Arena Stage, Washington DC in April. *On the Razzle*, TS's adaptation of a play by Johann Nestroy, is first performed at the Edinburgh Festival on September 1. The National Theatre's production opens at the Lyttelton Theatre on September 18. TS begins an original screenplay entitled *A O P*, and works on it for the next several years. It remains unproduced.
- 1982 *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* is revived with the London Symphony Orchestra. The US premiere of *On the Razzle* is performed at the Arena Stage,

- Washington DC in November. *The Real Thing* premieres at the Strand Theatre, London, on November 16. *The Dog It Was That Died*, a radio play, is broadcast in December.
- 1983 TS's English libretto of Prokofiev's opera, *The Love of Three Oranges*, is first performed at the Glyndebourne Festival, UK, on October 6.
- 1984 The US premiere of *The Real Thing*, with revisions, opens at the Plymouth Theatre, NYC, on January 5 (after tryouts in Boston), winning the Tony Award for Best Play. The television play *Squaring the Circle: Poland 1980-81* is televised by Channel 4 on May 31. The National Theatre production of *Rough Crossing*, TS's adaptation of Ferenc Molnar's *Play at the Castle*, opens at the Lyttelton Theatre on October 30.
- 1985 Revival of *Jumpers* (with revisions) opens at the Aldwych Theatre, London, on April 1. TS directs a revival of *The Real Inspector Hound* at the National Theatre. The film of TS's screenplay (with Terry Gilliam and Charles McKeon) of *Brazil* is released.
- 1986 The National Theatre production of *Dalliance*, TS's adaptation of Arnold Schnitzler's *Liebelei*, opens at the Lyttelton Theatre on May 27. TS's translation of Vaclav Havel's *Largo Desolato* premieres at the Theatre Royal, Bristol, UK, in October.
- 1987 The US premiere of *Dalliance* opens at the Long Wharf Theater, New Haven, CT, on March 13. The Roundabout Theatre production of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* opens at the Union Square Theatre, NYC, on April 29. The US premiere of *Largo Desolato* opens at the Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles. The film of TS's screenplay of *Empire of the Sun* is released.
- 1988 *Hapgood* premieres at the Aldwych Theatre on March 8. TS writes a screen adaptation (unproduced) of *A Far Off Place*, from the novel by Laurens van der Post. Stage adaptation of the 1972 radio play *Artist Descending a Staircase* opens at the King's Head Theatre on August 2; transfers to the Duke of York's Theatre in December.
- 1989 Television adaptation of his 1982 radio play *The Dog It Was That Died* is televised on Granada TV in January. The US premiere of *Hapgood*, with revisions, opens at the Doolittle Theatre, Los Angeles, in April. The US premiere of the stage version of *Artist Descending a Staircase* opens at the Helen Hayes Theatre, NYC, on November 30. TS is appointed to the Board of the National Theatre.
- 1990 In September, the film of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, with screenplay and direction by TS, wins the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival. The

- film of TS's screenplay of *The Russia House* is released in December.
- 1991 *In the Native State*, a radio play, is broadcast on BBC Radio in April. The film of TS's screenplay of *Billy Bathgate* is released in October.
- 1992 TS's marriage to Miriam Stoppard (separated since 1988) ends in divorce. He openly courts actress Felicity Kendal, who appeared in several of his previous productions. The first Broadway production of *The Real Inspector Hound* (on a double bill with *The Fifteen Minute Hamlet*) opens at the Criterion Theatre Stage Right on August 13. The first attempt at filming his screenplay (with Marc Norman) of *Shakespeare in Love* falls through.
- 1993 The National Theatre production of *Arcadia* opens on April 13. TS's English narration for Lehar's opera *The Merry Widow* is first performed at the Glyndebourne Festival in June. The Royal Shakespeare Company revival of *Travesties*, with revisions, opens at the Barbican on October 16. A radio adaptation of *Arcadia* is broadcast. TS writes a screen adaptation (unproduced) of *Hopeful Monsters* from the novel by Nicholas Mosley.
- 1994 The RSC production of *Travesties* transfers to the Savoy Theatre in London's West End on March 24. The National Theatre production of *Arcadia* also transfers to the West End at the Haymarket Theatre on May 23. A radio adaptation of his 1975 teleplay *Three Men in a Boat* is broadcast. TS writes a screen adaptation (unproduced) of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*. The Lincoln Center production (NYC premiere) of *Hapgood*, with revisions, opens at the Mitzi Newhouse Theatre on November 11.
- 1995 *Indian Ink*, a revision of his 1991 radio play, *In the Native State*, is first performed at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford UK; the London production opens at the Aldwych Theatre, London, on February 27. The US premiere of *Arcadia* opens at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre at Lincoln Center, NYC, on March 30. The National Theatre revival of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* opens at the Lyttelton Theatre in December.
- 1997 TS's adaptation of Chekhov's *The Seagull* is performed at the Old Vic, London, in May. The National Theatre production of *The Invention of Love* opens at the Cottesloe Theatre on October 1, moving to the Lyttelton Theatre on December 20. TS is knighted on December 12 and becomes Sir Tom Stoppard. This same year he is made an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.
- 1998 A revival of *The Real Inspector Hound* opens at the Comedy Theatre, London, on April 22. TS ends his relationship with Felicity Kendal. The US premiere of his adaptation of *The Seagull* opens at the TheatreFour, NYC, on May 27. A made-for-HBO production of TS's screenplay, *Poodle Springs*, is televised on July 25.

- TS writes a screen adaptation (unproduced) of his 1993 stage play, *Arcadia*. *The Invention of Love* opens at the Haymarket Theatre, London on November 3. The film of the revision of the unproduced 1992 screenplay of *Shakespeare in Love* opens in December.
- 1999 The US premiere of *Indian Ink* opens at the American Conservatory Theater in the Geary Theatre, San Francisco, on February 24. On March 21, TS wins an Academy Award for his screenplay of *Shakespeare in Love*. A revival of *The Real Thing* opens at the Donmar Warehouse, London, on June 1.
- 2000 The American Conservatory Theater production of *The Invention of Love* (US premiere) opens at the Geary Theater, San Francisco, on January 14. The Donmar Warehouse production of *The Real Thing* plays a limited engagement at the Albery Theatre, London, from January 13, before opening on Broadway at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on April 17, winning the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play. The film of TS's screenplay of *Vatel* is screened on May 10 at the Cannes Film Festival.
- 2001 The film of TS's screenplay of *Enigma* is screened at the Sundance Film Festival on January 22. The Lincoln Center production of *The Invention of Love* opens at the Lyceum Theatre, NYC, on March 29. The New York Shakespeare Festival production of *The Seagull*, directed by Mike Nichols, opens on August 12.
- 2002 The National Theatre production of *The Coast of Utopia* opens at the Olivier Theatre on August 3.
- 2003 The National Theatre revival of *Jumpers* opens at the Lyttelton Theatre on June 19, transferring to the Piccadilly Theatre on November 14. *Galileo*, written in the early 1970s, is finally staged on the Edinburgh Fringe in August. NYC premiere of *Indian Ink* opens at the Walkerspace Theatre on August 16.
- 2004 The first Broadway revival of *Jumpers* (a transfer of the National Theatre production of 2003) opens at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on April 25. TS's adaptation of Luigi Pirandello's *Henry IV* opens on May 4 at the Donmar Warehouse, London.
- 2005 TS creates a half-hour stage version of William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* for young actors. *Heroes*, TS's adaptation of Gérald Sibleyras' *Le Vent de Peupliers* opens at Wyndham's Theatre, London, on October 18.
- 2006 The American premiere of *Henry IV* is presented by the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis on February 8. *Rock 'n' Roll* premieres at the Royal Court Theatre, London, on June 3, then transfers to the West End, opening on July 22 at the Duke of York's Theatre. The US premiere of *The Coast of Utopia* trilogy of plays ("significantly

revised") begins previews at New York's Lincoln Center on October 17.

2007 The American premiere of *Heroes* opens at the Geffen Theatre, Los Angeles, on April 10. *The Bourne Ultimatum*, the film of TS's screenplay (cowritten with Tony Gilroy) is released.

A Note on the Play

Few critics would disagree that *The Real Thing* is a singularly pivotal piece among Tom Stoppard's considerable *oeuvre*. Some would readily place it among the best British plays of the 1980s and even among his top three or four plays ever. But justifying such a limited list is becoming nearly impossible as Stoppard's contributions to dramatic literature grow with astonishing consistency and excellence. Since the mid-1960s, he has written about one major play every eighteen months, though most recognize his early work by a single play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, first produced at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1966. But *The Real Inspector Hound* in 1968, *Jumpers* in 1972, and *Travesties* in 1974 showed he was more than just a one-shot playwright. He was becoming a major force on the English stage. Scattered in between were one-acts, screenplays and radio dramas, all further demonstrations of his impressive range, intimidating intellect, and remarkable facility with language and symbol.

But *The Real Thing* marked a noticeable change for Stoppard. Previously, Stoppard had been dismissed by some as merely clever, nothing more than a modern university wit, according to Robert Brustein. And "far too cerebral, too emotionally barren: all head and no heart," as Hersh Zeifman maintains. But *The Real Thing* would change all that. It seemed a deeply personal play, much more so than the others. Some even argue that it is his most autobiographical work, something Stoppard would not entirely deny. Responding to his critics that his work lacked emotion, he admitted, "Yes, [they] can't all be wrong... I'm a very shy, private person... [but] the older I get, the less I care about self-concealment." And indeed, beginning with this play, Stoppard answered his critics. Whereas most young playwrights, with great self-consciousness and self-indulgence, tend to write themselves into their early efforts, Stoppard had the good sense to avoid this trap until well into his forties. And though the play is painfully insightful and easily seen as a colorful window into his own life, it carries a maturity of thought, action, and intent that only a great playwright can achieve.

The play may well be autobiographical, but it is certainly a deeply personal work that reveals, among other things, the extent of his debt to earlier writers. He borrows and references many great literary sources, including the title and theme from a Henry James short story published in 1892. While the very first moment of the play is deliberately designed as a clever reversal of the end of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, structurally, the play has been compared to Pirandello. Teasing the audience with a false first scene that sets us up to think the play is about one couple when in fact they are simply actors in a

play—immediately requiring the audience to think more carefully about what is “real” as the play unfolds. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, a strikingly controversial work in its own day, comes immediately to mind. But I would argue the play comes closer to Pirandello’s *Right You Are If You Think You Are* in which the perception of what is real and not real dominates the action. While in Pirandello we are not meant to know which is ultimately real in the end, I would maintain that such is also true in Stoppard. He may hint by Henry’s apparent forgiveness, but one is still left wondering—what is true love? And does Henry actually represent it? Among other obvious references and allusions, Stoppard also throws bits of Strindberg’s *Miss Julie*, Ford’s *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore* as well as nods to Wilde, Shaw and Coward. It is an enormously rich work that encourages enriched thinking, but does not demand it.

Another critical point to consider is the extent and nature of the play’s universal themes. Every playwright hopes to write a play that will work and be relevant for decades to come. *The Real Thing* is often discussed as a play about love, eternal love, true love, the nature of jealousy, and the power of compassion in the face of deep pain. Doubtless this is why the play still works and will most likely work for years to come. Doubtless this is why so many consider this one of Stoppard’s very best plays. Yet it is too easy to fall into the convenient theme of “love is universal” and forget that this is a play fixed squarely in the early 1980s. What I mean is that while *The Real Thing* may present the variable perceptions of love in an effort to define true love (or the real thing), it also clings inevitably to the era in which it was written. An obvious statement perhaps, but worth noting nonetheless. Dramaturgs and historical critics love to discuss and compare the implications of concurrent historical events on a given work, using the historical chronology to provide insight into what the playwright was thinking. A standard practice that can yield surprisingly insightful stuff. But this play tends to defy that practice. *The Real Thing* opened in November of 1982 just half a year after the conclusion of the Falklands War and three years into the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. Yet neither of these two issues are addressed or even mentioned in the play in any direct way. Certainly there is off stage action at an anti-nukes protest, but for the most part, this play is decidedly non-political, at least not the politics of politics. Instead it reflects the politics of gender and sexuality at the height of the so-called Sexual Revolution—that era framed by Kinsey’s landmark studies of the early 1950s, boosted by the marketing of “the pill” in the early 1960s and concluded with the arrival of AIDS in the 1980s. For instance, the nonchalance with which the female characters admit to their infidelities is not just a reflection of a new moral standard or a maturity of relationships, it is an action infused with a kind of self-righteousness that characterized this generation as they cheered their self-declared freedom from earlier emotional constraints and Victorian mores. Was it truly freeing or merely self-serving social defiance of an older order? While it is clear that Stoppard wants us to admire Henry in the end for the clarity and depth of his true love for Annie, how many of us could in fact be so generous under similar conditions? Is Henry a genuine romantic hero of universal proportions or an improbable ideal of a bygone era? Is he sympathetic or is he a fool? Is this a happy ending or just a postponement?

Zeifman concludes, “In a sense, all of Stoppard’s major plays are about defining “the real thing”; the only element that varies from play to play is the nature of the particular “reality” under debate: philosophy, art, political freedom, the press. What remains constant is the debate formula itself, and the method of dramatizing it.” With *The Real Thing*, Stoppard “involves his audience in that debate not just intellectually, but viscerally... [and] we thus find ourselves at the end invariably questioning, among a host of other ‘realities,’ the precise nature of love—as Stoppard, of course, intended. Love speaks in many different tongues, with many different accents. Which of them, finally, is ‘the real thing’?”

A Brief History of the Thatcher Years

[Adapted from The History of Great Britain

<<http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:ORtCMR7RtrgJ:www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp%3Fgroupid%3D1179%26HistoryID%3Dab07+thatcher+years&hl=en&lr=&strip=1>>]

The victory of the Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher in the general election of 1979 heralds a sea change in Britain, replacing the old mood of consensus with the aggressively adversarial stance described as 'conviction' politics.

In Mrs. Thatchers's view 'there is no such thing as society' (one of her most frequently quoted and reviled observations), by which she means that the only underlying reality of society is individuals and families, all primarily interested in their own well-being. She believes people must be enabled to achieve their own self-betterment with minimum interference from the state or from the restrictive practices of professions and trade unions.

This new version of economic liberalism, threatening the achievements of what Mrs. Thatcher calls the 'nanny' state, divides the nation as nothing has for many decades. 'Thatcherism' and 'Thatcherite' become familiar words in the national vocabulary, hated and revered with equal passion by the two antagonist camps.

The prime minister's own choice of language reinforces this split. She divides people of influence into two groups, 'them' and 'us', according to their response to her energetic programme for change. 'Them' includes, very specifically, the doubters (or 'wets', in the phrase of the time) within the Conservative party.

From 1981 the Thatcher years coincide with the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the USA. Reagan agrees with Mrs. Thatcher’s views, with the result that their shared policies (including privatization) become extremely influential around the world. These policies derive from monetarism, a theory developed by the US economist Milton Friedman.

Monetarism asserts that control of the money supply (and thus the avoidance of inflation, though it is a matter of controversy that this necessary follows) is the only economic role properly undertaken by the state or its central bank. With that one exception, free market

forces are the best regulator of the economy. This is in keeping with the classical economics of Adam Smith, in direct opposition to the interventionist policy associated with Keynes.

The unflinching application of monetarism brings hardship to many in Britain, as unemployment soars to levels unknown in recent decades. Beggars reappear on British streets. As a result Mrs. Thatcher suffers early unpopularity. She is saved by her resolute handling of the Falklands War.

For part of the electorate she also increases her stature during the miners' strike of 1984-5. This is a fight for which she has been spoiling. The miners were at the heart of the General Strike in 1926. They have more recently gone on strike in 1972 (in support of a 47% wage claim) and in 1974 - on which occasion the Conservative prime minister, Edward Heath, introduces an emergency three-day week and calls an election.

Heath loses the election of 1974; the Labour government awards the miners a 35% increase; and Mrs. Thatcher challenges and defeats Heath to become leader of the opposition. Now, in 1984, she is determined that a miners' strike confronting her government will end differently. It does.

After an exceptionally bitter and violent confrontation lasting eleven months (April 1984 to March 1985), the miners return to work without achieving any settlement. As Mrs. Thatcher intends, this event is a turning point in the progressive loss of power of the unions in Britain - a development greeted with dismay on one side ('them') and with rejoicing on the other ('us'), in a typical Thatcherite split within the nation.

By the mid-1980s, with those in employment making good money (particularly in areas such as financial services) and with inflation sharply down from its 1970s peak, the mood of the country is swinging to the right. Mrs. Thatcher greatly increases her majority in 1983 and does almost as well in 1987. But the defects of her style are also beginning to tell.

It is the Russians who first give her a name which she is delighted to accept - the Iron Lady. But by the late 1980s she is using her apparent sense of invincible power (characterized by the cartoonists as the lethal swing of a handbag) to push through unpopular policies, dispensed like bitter medicine for the supposed good health of the nation.

The most notable example of this is the poll tax introduced with her enthusiastic support in 1989, six centuries after the cautionary tale of 1381. She proclaims it as a fair tax, in the limited sense that everybody pays the same (apart from a few categories eligible for an 80% reduction). In the spring of 1990 there are poll-tax riots in London, followed by an orchestrated campaign of non-payment.

By now Mrs. Thatcher's cabinet colleagues find her self-assertion increasingly unacceptable. High-profile resignations (notably Lawson in 1989, Howe in 1990) result

in her removal from office by her own colleagues. At the end of 1990 she is challenged for the leadership and loses. The sense of betrayal felt by her faction blights the Conservative party for the rest of the decade.

Glossary –*The Real Thing*

Act One

Basel... Ba'l (p, 10) – Third largest city in Switzerland, located on the Rhine, northeast of the Jura, immediately adjacent to both France and Germany. “Ba'l” is the French pronunciation.

Geneva (p. 11) – City in southwest Switzerland near the border with France (pop. In 1990, 167,200). It is situated on the shores of Lake Geneva (known in French as Lac Léman).

Loch Ness (p. 11) – A long, deep lake in northwest Scotland, famed for its monster.

Nouvelle cuisine (p. 12) – French for “new cookery,” it was a form of cooking that became popular in the 1970s, emphasizing presentation and avoiding heaviness. Portions were often considered too small for the American appetite. It was the source of much ridicule as being elitist and over-priced.

Gerund (p. 12) – A grammatical term in which a form of the verb, ending in -ing, functions as a noun. In this case, “I thought you like me [my] showing an interest in your work.”

Sotheby's... Christie's (p. 12) – Two of the world's oldest and most respected auction houses, both based in London and founded in 1744 and 1766 respectively. They are most renowned for handling the sale of the world's most valuable antiques and works of art.

Rembrandt (p.13) – Rembrandt Marmensz van Rijn (1606-1669), Dutch painter—among the most celebrated artists of all time. Perhaps most famous for his group portraits of Dutch merchants and his series of self-portraits. While his reputation lasted long after his death, it received a substantial boost by the Romantics, who viewed Rembrandt as a great fashioner of everyday life and character.

Finnegan's Wake (p. 16) – James Joyce's final novel published in 1939. While it is now considered one of the greatest literary works of the twentieth century, the book was initially met with skepticism and confusion. Written in a modernist style and containing

countless obscure allusions and multi-lingual puns, the work left many critics challenging its meaning and intent. Not until 1950s was the book fully recognized as a masterpiece, albeit a complex and difficult work to read.

Bournemouth (p. 16) – English seaside resort on the Channel coast, favored by retirees.

Deauville (p. 16) – The French equivalent of Bournemouth, almost directly across the English Channel from Bournemouth, in fact.

Jean Paul Sartre (p. 16) – Famed French writer, especially noted for his philosophical work in existentialism. Author of *Nausee* (1938), *Being and Nothingness* (1943), and *Huit clos (No Exit)* (1944).

St. Moritz (p.17) – The elite Swiss resort town known for its great skiing and high prices.

Strauss (p. 17) – Johann Strauss the Younger (1825-1899), Austrian composer. Known as “the waltz king,” he composed some of the world’s most famous waltzes, including *The Blue Danube* (1867), *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (1868), and the operetta *Die Fledermaus* (1874).

The Crystals & “Da Do Ron Ron” (p. 17) – The Crystals were a Phil Spector group who had formed in the late 1950s and recorded a string of hits for Spector’s Philles label before being reformed in 1963 for the recording of “Da Do Ron Ron”—written by Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich. The song eventually reached #3 on the US charts and #5 in the UK, becoming one of the most popular US hits in England during the early 1960s.

Buck’s Fizz (p. 19) – Champagne, orange juice and sometimes grenadine. Also called a mimosa.

Desert Island Discs (p. 19) – The world’s longest running music program, found today on BBC Radio 4. Originally broadcast in 1942, it invites famous guests to discuss the eight records they would prefer to have with him if they were marooned on a desert island. They are also asked to select one book and one luxury item.

Pick-a-sticks (p. 21) – An English children’s game in which a random pile of sticks is taken apart, one by one, without disturbing the remaining sticks. Similar to the American version called “pickup sticks.”

Badinage (p. 22) – Playful banter.

Pink Floyd (p. 24) – British rock band formed in the mid-1960s. The debut album, “The Piper at the Gates of Dawn” (1967) established them as one of the leading “acid rock” bands of the time. Their most famous albums include “Dark Side of the Moon” (1973) and “The Wall” (1979).

Dame Janet Baker (p. 24) – English mezzo-soprano; born 1933, retired 1982.

Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders & “Um Um Um Um Um Um” (p. 24) – British rock band from Manchester formed in 1963. Their 1964 hit “Um Um Um Um Um Um” topped the charts in the UK and reached #5 in the US. Also known for “A Groovy Kind of Love” (1966) which reached #2 in the US.

Neil Sedaka & “Oh Carol” (p. 24) – American pop music composer and performer. Born in Brooklyn in 1939, he was signed to the Decca label in 1958 at the age of 19. He composed “Oh Carol” for his high school girlfriend, Carole King, reaching #9 on the US charts.

Herman’s Hermits (p. 24) – English pop band formed in 1963 as part of the “British Invasion” following closely on the footsteps of The Beatles. They were particularly renowned for the clean-up looks and largely upbeat songs. They were fronted by Peter Noone, who was only 16 years old, but had already a respectable acting resume on British television. Their first big hit, “I’m into Something Good,” was released in August of 1964.

The Hollies (p. 24) – Another English band from Manchester, the Hollies were formed in 1962 and soon became one of the most successful pop bands of the era. One of their biggest hits was “Bus Stop” (1966). Among the original members was Graham Nash who went on to greater fame as part of Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young.

The Everly Brothers (p. 24) – Don and Phil Everly were an American pop duet who combined both country and rock & roll into a extremely successful act that helped form the “rockabilly” movement in American music. Their first big hit was “Bye Bye Love” (1956) which climbed to #2 on the US charts. Although they broke up in 1973, they reformed in 1983 and still perform occasionally.

Brenda Lee (p. 24) – An American pop singer, born in 1944, she began her recording career in 1956 at the age of 11. Despite her youthfulness, she was renowned for her adult sound and soon became one of the first female idols in pop music. Her career thrived on a string of hits between 1956 and 1967 that appealed to both rock & rock and country fans. By the 1970s, she had become a major star in country music.

The Supremes (p. 24) – Acknowledge as the most successful of the Motown groups, they were active from 1959 to 1977. The original members, all from Detroit, were Florence Ballard, Mary Wilson, and Diana Ross. Between 1964 and 1969, they accumulated twelve #1 hits on the US charts, most written by either Berry Gordy or Smokey Robinson. Their first Top 40 hit was “When the Lovelight Starts Shining Through His Eyes” (1963). Other hits included “Baby Love” (1964), “Stop! In the Name of Love” (1965), “Someday We’ll Be Together” (1969).

Covent Garden (p. 24) – The popular name for the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, home to the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet in London.

Callas (p. 24) – Maria Callas (1923-1977), Greek-born American opera singer. Perhaps the best known opera star in the post-World War Two era.

Righteous Brothers & “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’” (p. 24) – American pop duo of Bill Medley and Bobby Hatfield who recorded a long list of major hits between 1963 and 1977. Their first #1 hit was “You’ve Lost that Lovin’ Feelin’” (1965). It was produced by Phil Spector and was an early example of Spector’s “wall of sound” phenomenon. It remains the most played pop song of all time, having been broadcast an estimated 8 million times to date.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (p. 28) – George Roy Hill’s 1969 film, starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford in the title roles. In one of the film’s most memorable scenes, Newman and Redford are forced to jump off a cliff into a raging river to avoid capture. Just before they jump, Redford confesses that he can’t swim. “Why you crazy,” responds Newman, “the fall with probably kill you.”

Barnes Common (p. 30) – The largest area of unenclosed common land within greater metropolitan London—just northwest of Richmond on the south bank of the Thames.

Last of the Mohicans (p. 30) – James Fenimore Cooper’s epic novel, published in 1826.

Norfolk (p. 31) – A reference to Noel Coward’s play, *Private Lives* (1930)

Elyot: I met her on a house party in Norfolk.

Amanda: Very flat, Norfolk.

Elyot: There's no need to be unpleasant.

Amanda: That was no reflection on her, unless of course she made it flatter.

Little Barmouth (p. 31) – Popular coastal resort town on the northwest coast of Wales.

“Missiles Out” (p. 31) – A reference to an influential political movement in Britain during the 1970s centered on the removal of American nuclear missiles and air bases from British soil.

Whitehall (p. 32) – Traditional seat of the British government, located in Westminster, between the Houses of Parliament and Trafalgar Square. Originally it was the site of the Palace of Whitehall, hence the name.

Saint Augustine (p. 33) – Known as Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430), he was a born in North Africa and converted to Christianity in 386. He wrote extensively on early church doctrine and morality, forming the basis of much of later Christian theological philosophy. Among his more famous writings is included his prayer in which he urges God to “grant me chastity and continence, but not yet.”

“...national shrine... war memorial...” (p. 33) – The Cenotaph on Whitehall, London. Britain’s version of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, built in 1919 to honor the dead of WWI.

August Strindberg & *Miss Julie* (p. 35) – Strindberg (1849-1912) was a Swedish-born playwright and novelist who was a major proponent of both naturalism and early expressionism. Among his best-known works are *The Father* (1887), *To Damascus, Parts I, II, and III* (1898-1904), and *A Dream Play* (1902). *Miss Julie* (1888) was one of his naturalistic works that depicted the brutal power struggle that he perceived existed between the sexes.

Lacuna (p. 38) – A gap in a manuscript or musical work usually indicated by [...].

“Tres gentil... I get about, you know.” (p. 39) – Passage from Strindberg’s *Miss Julie*.

“Trés gentil, Monsieur Jean, très gentil!” – “Very nice, Mr. Jean, very nice!”

“Vous voulez plaisanter, madame!” – “You want to joke, madam!”

“Vous voulez parle française?” – “And you want to speak French?”

“Charmant” – “Charming.”

A priori (p. 42) – Derived from reasoning or deduction rather than direct experience.

De facto (p. 42) – Latin for “in fact” or “in practice,” it implies that something exists despite a lack of official establishment or recognition.

Act Two

Verdi (p. 44) – Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901), Italian composer, best known for his operas *Rigoletto* (1851), *La Traviata* (1853), *Otello* (1887) and *Aida* (1871). His works reflected a strong nationalistic sentiment, coinciding with his support of Italian unity under Garibaldi.

Monteverdi (p. 44) – Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) was an Italian composer who helped to solidify the form of opera with his seminal work *Orfeo* (1607).

***Madame Butterfly* (p. 45)** – Puccini’s 1904 opera, based on David Belasco’s famous 1900 staging of a short story (1898) by John Luther Long.

Andrews Sisters (p. 45) – Popular American singing trio who were among the dominate acts during the “Big Band Era” of the 1930s and 1940s. The sisters (Maxene, Patti and LaVerne) began their rise to fame on radio in 1937 and were among the most popular acts during World War Two. They broke up in 1953 as the big band sound began to fade.

The Big Bopper (p. 45) – J. P. “The Big Bopper” Richardson (1930-1959), American disc jockey and rock and roll singer, known best for his hit single “Chantilly Lace”

(1958). He died, along with Buddy Holly and Richie Valens, in a plane crash during a tour of the Midwest in February of 1959.

Buddy Holly (p. 45) – One of most famous of the early rock and roll legends, Buddy Holly (1936-1959) was only 22 at the time of his death, but he had already established himself as a leading performer and composer of pop music. His best known hits include “That’ll Be the Day” (1957) and “Oh Boy” (1957).

Richie Valens (p. 45) – Richie Valens (Richard Valenzuela, 1941-1959) is perhaps best known today as the first great Latino rock and roll star. Though his career lasted only eight months, he produced a list of hits, including “Donna” (1958) and “La Bamba” (1958).

Three Sisters (p. 46) – Anton Chekhov’s play, first produced in 1901, tells the story of the bleak life of the Prozorov sisters, condemned to live out their decaying life in a small town hundreds of miles from their beloved Moscow.

Webster (p. 46) – John Webster (c. 1580-c.1625), English playwright who do not write *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, though he did write several other bleak Jacobean revenge tragedies, among them *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1623).

Ford (p. 46) – John Ford (1586-c. 1640) was the Jacobean playwright who did, in fact, write *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore* (1633), as well as a handful of other lesser known plays.

Glasgow (p. 46) – Scotland’s largest city with a population of nearly 700,000. It is an important shipping and commercial center. While not known for its scenic beauty, Glasgow is the industrial and financial heart of Scotland.

Mussolini (p. 47) – Benito Mussolini, “Il Duce” (1883-1945), was the founder of the Italian Fascist Party in 1919. After his infamous Blackshirts marched on Rome in 1922, he was name Prime Minister and established a dictatorship. He aligned himself with Adolph Hitler and Japan to form the Axis during World War Two. Upon the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943, he was forced to resign and was imprisoned. Freed by the Germans the next year, he was eventually captured by Italian communists and executed.

Apologia (p. 49) – A formal defense, often a philosophical treatise.

Das Kapital (p. 50) – Karl Marx’s extensive treatise on economic philosophy that was highly critical of the capitalist system and served as the foundation of communism. The first volume was published in 1867, with the succeeding two volumes published posthumously by Friedrich Engles in 1885 and 1894.

MCC (p, 50) – Marylebone Cricket Club, founded in 1787, is the world’s oldest and remains guardian of the game’s rules.

Stout Cortez (p. 52) – From John Keats’ famous sonnet “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (1817):

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet never did I breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific - and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise -
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

The interesting irony here is that Cortez did not discover the Pacific; Balboa did.

‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore (p. 54) – John Ford’s Jacobean bloody revenge tragedy, first produced in 1633, about an incestuous affair between a brother (Giovanni) and sister (Annabella).

“That Juno for her forehead did exceed...” (p. 57) – From Ford’s *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, Juno is the primary Roman goddess and wife of Jupiter.

Promethean fire (p. 58) – Prometheus was one of the Titans, the pre-Olympian gods, who stole fire from Zeus by trickery and gave it to humans, against Zeus’ desires. As punishment, Zeus tied Prometheus to a rock where his liver was eaten by an eagle. Being immortal, his liver renewed each day and the torture was repeated until Hercules rescued him. In this instance, the reference in meant to imply both the fascination and danger inherent in gaining such “fire.”

Anchorite (p. 58) – Christian mystic of the middle ages who usually lived a reclusive, hermit-like existence.

Virgo syntacta (p. 59) – a pun on the Latin phrase, *virgo intacta* (meaning a genuine virgin), playing on the word “syntax.”

Jodhpurs (p. 59) – Traditional riding trousers with a full cut above the knee and tight below.

British Council tour (p. 59) – The British Council was established in 1934 as a non-departmental public body and charitable organization designed to promote culture both at

home and abroad. British Council tours of plays and other performances were often distinguished by their safe, conservative nature.

Zagreb (p. 59) – The capital city of Croatia with a population just over 700,000.

The Searchers (p. 61) – A British band founded in the early 1960s as part of the “merseybeat”—bands in the mold of The Beatles. Among their best known hits was “Needles and Pins” (1963).

“All Shook Up” (p. 61) – Composed by Otis Blackwell, this was one of Elvis’ first big hits, reaching the #1 spot on the pop charts in 1957.

Henry Ibsen (p. 61) – A play on the name of Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), Norwegian playwright and proponent of Realism and early *symbolism*, with such works as *A Doll’s House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), and *The Master Builder* (1892). One of the most important and influential writers of the modern era.

“...amo, amas, amat...” (p. 61) – The first three Latin declensions of “to love”: I love, you love, he/she/it loves. Often the first lesson in a Latin program.

Bertie Wooster (p. 62) – The narrator and protagonist of P.G. Wodehouse’s *Jeeves* stories which first appeared in 1917.

***In extremis* (p. 62)** – Latin meaning at the point of death or under the most extreme circumstances.

Chips Rafferty (p. 64) – Australian film star of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. The quintessential film Aussie; a precursor of *Crocodile Dundee*, star of dozens of B-movies set in Australia.

Duragel (p. 65) – Contraceptive cream, now discontinued in the UK.

Euston Station (p. 68) – One of London’s oldest rail stations, it was built in 1837 and is located north of the city in the borough of Camden. It is the main station to the West Midlands, the North West and Southern Scotland.

Bach (p. 74) – Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), German composer who wrote what would become known as “Air on the G String.” The piece was originally part of his *Orchestra Suite No. 3 in D Major*, written sometime between 1717 and 1723. It was adapted, and renamed, in the late nineteenth-century by the violinist August Wilhelmj, who played the work entire on his G string.

Procul Harum (p. 74) – A British rock band formed in the mid-1960s. They recorded their one great hit, *A Whiter Shade of Pale*, in 1967. Composed by band members Gary Brooker and Matthew Fisher, the song was released in August during the height of the

famous “Summer of Love” and bumped The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper* from the #1 spot. It quickly became one of the most identifiable anthems of the Hippie era.

“hoist... petard” (p. 75) –“Hoist by your own petard” – From Hamlet, meaning literally to harm oneself while attempting to harm someone else. Hoist, of course, means to lift. Petard – An explosive device developed in the Middle Ages and designed to destroy doors, gates and walls. So the phrase is equivalent to being blown up by one’s own bomb.

List of Songs from the Play

“Da Do Ron Ron” by The Crystals. First released in 1963, it reached #3 on the US charts. Produced by Phil Spector and composed by Jeff Barry and Ellie Greenwich.

“Um Um Um Um Um Um,” Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders. First released in 1964, it topped the UK charts and reached #5 in the US.

“Oh Carol,” Neil Sedaka. Written by Sedaka for his high school girlfriend, Carole King, it was recorded and released in 1959. It was produced by RCA and reached #9 on the US charts.

“You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling,” Righteous Brothers. Written by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, it was produced by Phil Spector. It reached the top spot on the US charts in 1965.

“A Whiter Shade of Pale,” Procol Harum. Written by Gary Brooker and Matthew Fisher. The song reached the top of the charts in August of 1967.

“I’m into Something Good,” Herman’s Hermits. Written by Carole King and Gerry Goffin, it reached #1 in the UK and #13 in the US in September 1964.

“I’m a Believer,” The Monkees. Composed by Neil Diamond and produced by Jeff Barry, the song hit the #1 spot on the US charts in December 1966 and became the biggest selling record of 1967.

Quotations from Interviews and the Works of Tom Stoppard

"A healthy attitude is contagious but don't wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier."

"A movie camera is like having someone you have a crush on watching you from afar - you pretend it's not there."

"Age is a very high price to pay for maturity."

"Back in the East you can't do much without the right papers, but with the right papers you can do anything. They believe in papers. Papers are power."

"Beauty is desired in order that it may be befouled; not for its own sake, but for the joy brought by the certainty of profaning it."

"Carnal embrace is the practice of throwing one's arms around a side of beef."

"Don't you see?! We're actors – we're the opposite of people!"

"Eternity's a terrible thought. I mean, where's it all going to end?"

"Every exit is an entrance somewhere else."

"From principles is derived probability, but truth or certainty is obtained only from facts."

"Get me inside any boardroom and I'll get any decision I want."

"Good things, when short, are twice as good."

"I don't think writers are sacred, but words are. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones in the right order, you can nudge the world a little or make a poem which children will speak for you when you're dead."

"I mean, if Beethoven had been killed in a plane crash at twenty-two, the history of music would have been very different. As would the history of aviation, of course."

"I still believe that if your aim is to change the world, journalism is a more immediate short-term weapon."

"If you associate enough with older people who do enjoy their lives, who are not stored away in any golden ghettos, you will gain a sense of continuity and of the possibility for a full life."

"If you carry your childhood with you, you never become older."

"It is better of course to know useless things than to know nothing."

“It is not hard to understand modern art. If it hangs on a wall it's a painting, and if you can walk around it it's a sculpture.”

“It's better to be quotable than to be honest.”

“It's not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting.”

“James Joyce - an essentially private man who wished his total indifference to public notice to be universally recognized.”

“Life is a gamble, at terrible odds - if it was a bet you wouldn't take it.”

“My whole life is waiting for the questions to which I have prepared answers.”

“My work always tried to unite the true with the beautiful; but when I had to choose one or the other, I usually chose the beautiful.”

“Responsibilities gravitate to the person who can shoulder them.”

“Revolution is a trivial shift in the emphasis of suffering.”

“Skill without imagination is craftsmanship and gives us many useful objects such as wickerwork picnic baskets. Imagination without skill gives us modern art.”

“The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means.”

“The days of the digital watch are numbered.”

“The House of Lords, an illusion to which I have never been able to subscribe - responsibility without power, the prerogative of the eunuch throughout the ages.”

“The media. It sounds like a convention of spiritualists.”

“We are tied down to a language which makes up in obscurity what it lacks in style.”

“We give advice by the bucket, but take it by the grain.”

“What a fine persecution - to be kept intrigued without ever quite being enlightened.”

“You talked animatedly for some time about language being the aniseed trail that draws the hounds of heaven when the metaphysical fox has gone to earth; he must have thought you were barmy.”

“What is an artist? For every thousand people there's nine hundred doing the work, ninety doing well, nine doing good, and one lucky bastard who's the artist.”

“You are an over-excited little man, with a need for self-expression far beyond the scope of your natural gifts. This is not discreditable. Neither does it make you an artist. An artist is the magician put among men to gratify – capriciously - their urge for immortality.”

Summary of Reviews

"Passion is not usually what one looks for amid the intellectual and verbal gymnastics that make Tom Stoppard's writing so stimulating. But that's what drives *The Real Thing* ...: passion between a man and a woman and passion of that man for language, for finding just the right word to express a meaning." – Nancy Chernin, *The Los Angeles Times*, 19 May 1997

"*The Real Thing* is the real thing, a play by a world-class writer, a play with insights that follow you out of the theater and deep into the night." – Laurie Winer, *The Los Angeles Times*, 24 January 1998

"In this anatomy of an emotionally naive playwright and the marital maneuvers in the theater world around him, Stoppard brings head and heart, life and art together in an exhilarating way." – Steven Winn, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 May 1998

"The quality of love, though, is not the only thing Stoppard has in mind with regard to the subject of the real thing. The play deals with a playwright, actors and actresses, dodging in delicate patterns between make-believe and reality, and whether their own work constitutes a sham or the real thing." – T.H. McCulloh, *The Los Angeles Times*, 30 September 1998

"The beauty of this play is that it combines structural intricacy with pain and passion. ... Among many other things, the play offers a sentimental education in which Henry learns the gift of inarticulacy." – Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 3 June 1999

"In 1982 this was the one that first showed us Stoppard has a heart as well as a head... *The Real Thing* turns out to be just that, a play which reminds you why you go to the theatre and why you fall in love. And why, just sometimes, it is all worth the effort." – Sheridan Morley, *The Spectator*, 12 June 1999

"True, this 1982 play... is also always subverting itself, pointing out how some things, love among them, defy glib articulation. But, ah, how articulately it manages to say so. If its structural game-playing seems a tad too clever... and its second act weaker than its first, the fact remains that few comedies have ever managed to have it so successfully both ways." – Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*, 18 April 2000

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- 1967 *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*
1968 *Enter a Free Man; The Real Inspector Hound*
1970 *After Magritte*
1972 *Jumpers*
1973 *House of Bernarda Alba* (trans. & adapt.)
1974 *Travesties*
1976 *Dirty Linen and New-Found-Land*
1977 *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*
1978 *Night and Day*
1979 *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth; Undiscovered Country* (trans. & adapt.)
1981 *On the Razzle*
1982 *The Real Thing*
1984 *Rough Crossing*
1986 *Dalliance; Largo Desolato* (trans. & adapt.)
1988 *Hapgood; Artist Descending a Staircase*
1993 *Arcadia*
1995 *Indian Ink*
1997 *The Invention of Love; The Seagull* (trans. & adapt.)
2002 *The Coast of Utopia*
2004 *Henry IV* (trans. & adapt.)
2005 *Heroes* (trans. & adapt.)
2006 *Rock 'n' Roll*

Works for Radio, Television and Film

- 1963 *A Walk on the Water*
1967 *Another Moon Called Earth*
1975 *Three Men in a Boat; The Romantic Englishwoman; The Boundary*
1977 *Professional Foul*
1980 *The Human Factor*
1983 *Squaring the Circle*
1985 *Brazil*
1987 *Empire of the Sun*
1990 *The Russia House, Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*
1991 *Billy Bathgate*
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<http://whyy.org/cgi-bin/FAshowretrieve.cgi?2566>

Lincoln Center Theatre's Platform Series: A Conversation with Tom Stoppard

http://www.lct.org/calendar/platform_detail.cfm?id_event=32593717

NewsHour with Jim Lehrer interviews about Tom Stoppard

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/jan-june99/stoppard_3-10.html

"Pragmatic Theater" by Tom Stoppard, *The New York Review of Books*, 23 Sep. 1999

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/390>

Salon.com profile of Tom Stoppard

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment/jan-june99/stoppard_3-10.html

Salon.com review of Ira Nadel's biography of Stoppard

<http://dir.salon.com/story/books/review/2002/09/10/stoppard/index.html>

Tom Stoppard's Papers at the University of Texas at Austin

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/stoppard.hp.html>

Tom Stoppard page on the Internet Broadway Database

<http://www.ibdb.com/person.asp?ID=8912>

Tom Stoppard page on the Internet Theatre Database

<http://www.theatredb.com/QPerson.php?pid=p001706>

Travesties: A Tom Stoppard Website by Michael Berry

<http://www.sff.net/people/mberry/stoppard.htm>

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