Rehearsal photos from the CAPITAL production

Contents

This study pack was compiled by Assistant Director Jon Pashley.

Tom Stoppard

Tom Stoppard's origins are in what is now the Czech Republic and what was in 1937, the year of Stoppard's birth, Czechoslovakia. Stoppard's family fled the Nazis to Singapore (where Stoppard's biological father was killed), India, and finally arrived in Britain in 1946 complete with a new stepfather for Stoppard – a British army officer. Amongst Stoppard's earliest jobs was journalism, and he has since written for the stage, radio, television, and the screen. Famed for his oblique manner, and ability to distance interviewers with eminently quotable, but slightly puzzling remarks, Stoppard's persona is enigmatic – somewhere between a 18th century *boulevardier* and a rock star. Emerging partly from the great traditions of Eastern European drama, and partly from a firmly Western mode, Stoppard's work has tended to evade easy classification. True, certain strong themes are evident and these tend to figure in small batches of plays: *Jumpers* (1972) and *Travesties* (1974), for example, are flavoured with absurdism. The suppression of human rights in the Eastern bloc heavily influenced material like *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, and *Professional Foul* (1977) – themes that recurred in *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* (1979), and *Squaring the Circle* (1984). Intellectual history is never far from the surface either: *Arcadia*, and *The Coast of Utopia* (2002), for example. Stoppard is capable, also, of domesticating politics: his

study of the poet Housman's lengthy and

unconsummated love for a young male athlete in *The*

Invention of Love (1997) was extremely well received by

critics. It should not be overlooked, either, that

Stoppard's plays are frequently funny, manifesting an

overt intellectualism constantly undercut by a refined

facetiousness. Above all, though, his works are about the

business of ideas, and the *performance* of those ideas.

Like few other playwrights Stoppard is able to make his

work performative in the sense that he attempts to

incorporate the governing ideas into the very fabric and

structure of a piece. This is what sets him apart, I believe,

as one of our most fascinating living dramatists.

Dr Nicholas Monk
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Research interests include the relationship between pedagogy
and performance, theories of modernity, and the "postsecular"
in society. He has published on Cormac McCarthy and Native
American Literature.

Further reading:

- Jim Hunter, *'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead', 'Jumpers', 'Travesties', 'Arcadia'*

    (Faber Critical Guides)

- Katherine E. Kelly, *The Cambridge Companion to Tom Stoppard*

- http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth254 (British Council Arts Group website)

- http://www.sondheimguide.com/Stoppard/

Arcadia: Fact file

First performance

Arcadia opened at the Lyttelton Theatre, Royal National Theatre, on 13 April 1993. The production was directed by Trevor Nunn.

Title

Arcadia is a real area of rural Greece. In arts and literature, it has come to signify an ideal, pastoral setting. The phrase *Et in Arcadia ego* comes from a seventeenth-century painting by Nicolas Poussin called *Les Bergers d'Arcadie* (The Arcadian Shepherds) which features a group of shepherds grouped around a tomb on which the phrase is written. Translation of this phrase is subject to controversy as it contains no verb, literally it renders 'And in Arcadia I'. William Hazlitt suggested, in the nineteenth century, 'I was also an Arcadian', in reference to the deceased; other suggestions include 'Even in Arcadia, there am I/I exist', where the speaker is a personified Death: the suggestion is that death pervades even the most idyllic world and that all good things must inevitably come to an end. This idea permeates the play in many ways, the most literal example being the hunting which takes place in the halcyon settings of Sidley Park. Erwin Panofsky wrote a famous essay on the painting, published in his *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, in which he discusses interpretations of the *memento mori*.

Structure

The play is written in two acts, with four scenes in the first and three in the second. The scenes alternate between two periods, the nineteenth century and the "present day", with the exception of the last scene of the first act and the first of the second, which are both set in the present. This is the only instance of consecutive scenes taking place in the same period. In the final scene, the action of the two periods overlaps and interweaves. All the action takes place in a single room in a large, country house in Derbyshire.

In 1809, thirteen-year-old Thomasina Coverly, under the tutelage of Septimus Hodge, questions the "natural order" of things and starts thinking about the world in a way which anticipates the laws of thermodynamics and chaos theory, but what she is really interested in is sex. Meanwhile, in the present day, garden historian Hannah Jarvis and Byron scholar Bernard Nightingale are making their own discoveries. By interlacing these stories, Stoppard examines the ways in which we enter into a dialogue with what came before us and how we try to make sense of the world as scientists, poets, mathematicians, landscape designers, physicists and lovers.
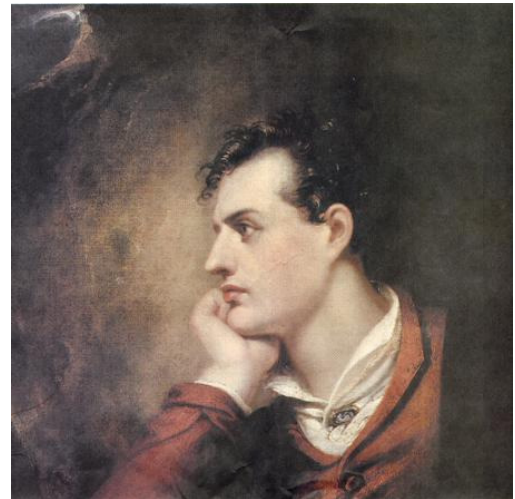
Enlightenment and Romanticism

Arcadia is set on the cusp of things, on the edge of nineteenth-century Romanticism as it develops out of eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The situation, as Hannah at first sees it, looking back from the present day, is one the degeneration and decadence of rational thought:

> A century of intellectual rigour turned in on itself. A mind in chaos suspected of genius. In a setting of cheap thrills and false emotion.

What *Arcadia* is also set on the edge of is Byronism, with its emphasis on personality and posturing, on creating one's self for the look of others. *Arcadia* opens in 1809, three years before Byron awoke and found himself famous with the publication of his travel poem *Childe Harold*. But *Arcadia* is also too smart a play to believe in simple transitions from one thing to another.

Reason may be dissolving in a period that emphasizes the observer's paradox, the way that who is looking changes what is seen, but that also means one thing never simply changes into something absolutely uniquely different. Byron is not just a Romantic author. He is also, at least to Bernard, 'an eighteenth-century Rationalist touched by genius', although given Bernard's own personality, one never knows whether we can trust any of his judgments in the play (not least when he is so wrong about Byron's role in the events at Sidley Park). How things come out of each other, the nature of causation, and

Lord Byron

whether there is free will or determinism, are major questions for the Enlightenment that the play shows undergoing the Romantic turn which ultimately produces the chaos theory in our own times. Everything is related to everything else, but for the post-romantic imagination it's related in ways so complex that it is almost impossible to compute. For Bernard, this means the attempt at knowledge might as well be sacrificed to the cult of 'personality'. But for Byron himself, and contemporaries like Hazlitt and Keats, it was more a case of the way everything has to be computed through what Hazlitt called 'our mixed imperfect being.'

> I had a dream, which was not all a dream,
> The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
> Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
> Rayless, and pathless; and the icy earth
> Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air…
>
> *from 'Darkness', Lord Byron*

Far from a Romantic belief in the primacy of the self, the stability of identity itself seems uncertain, we see a world in which everything is connected to everything else, including the present to the past, in ways so complex they are almost impossible to disentangle. We might think of this complex web as a form of Romantic skepticism, except that it is a phenomenon stretching from David Hume's critique of the Enlightenment from within and his enquiries into the uncertainties of cause and effect and the dependence of reason upon the passions. What the play leaves us with, though, is something like Byron's own axiom: 'I deny nothing, but doubt everything'.

Jon Mee
Professor of Romanticism Studies, University of Warwick
Writings include Romanticism, Enthusiasm, and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period *and* Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s.

What is Chaos Theory?

Chaos is irregular and unpredictable behaviour occurring in a system that runs according to rigid rules that have no explicit random features. This combination may seem paradoxical, but it is actually very common.

For instance, there is chaos in your kitchen.

When you make bread you knead the dough, repeatedly stretching it and folding it back together. This process mixes up the ingredients, because stretching the dough smears out any lumps where, say, there is a lot of flour. The subsequent folding stops the dough escaping from the kitchen, and makes it possible to repeat the operation over and over again.

The mixing process does not rely on any random effects. Simple mathematical models show that a perfectly regular stretch-and-fold procedure still mixes everything up, Even when the future movements of every single particle of flour are completely determined by the kneading procedure, the fate of any particular particle is unpredictable, because we can never be completely sure where any particle of flour is *right now*. When we knead the dough, any two nearby particles quickly move apart, each doing its own thing. Any error in our measurement of the position of such a particle, however small, in effect replaces it by a different, nearby particle. However close this 'ghost particle' may be to the real one, the mixing process gives it a very different future. So in practice we have no idea of precisely how the particle will move as time passes.

The kneading process is a dynamical system—something whose immediate future is determined by its present according to some fixed rule. The long-term future can be found, in principle, by applying the rule over and over again. Such systems are inherently deterministic: if we know exactly where to start, there is only one possible future. In practice, however, we *don't* know exactly where to start. We can't measure the present state with infinite precision. Repetitions of the rule magnify the tiniest error until it swamps any prediction. This is the famous "butterfly effect", in which a flap of a butterfly's wing causes a long-term change in the weather. It was noticed in 1963 by the meteorologist Edward Lorenz (who died in April 2008). Any dynamical system in which tiny errors grow rapidly is said to be "chaotic".

Weather is a good example, in fact. Of course in the real world we can't run the weather twice, changing only one flap of one wing. But the butterfly effect is commonplace in the mathematical models used to forecast weather, and it is why forecasts three or four days ahead are usually wrong. And those methods are based on very accurate physical representations of how real weather behaves.

"Chaos theory" is a name given by the media to the study of chaotic dynamics. Mathematicians prefer to think of it as just one new component of an old subject, dynamical systems. But it is a very significant component, because it changes our view of what a deterministic system can do, and what we mean by a scientific prediction. Chaos became widely known in the 1960s, after a lengthy "prehistory". It is now a routine part of the scientific and mathematical toolkit, and it shows up in virtually all branches of science. Its applications include hard-core physics such as the behaviour of variable stars, biological questions such as the dynamics of animal populations or the spread of epidemics, and how the blood vessels in the human body transport oxygen. It has even been used to measure the quality of wire used in making springs.

Ian Stewart
Professor of Mathematics, University of Warwick
Writings include What Shape is a Snowflake? *(2001)*, How to Cut a Cake *(2006) and* Why Beauty is Truth *(2007).*

Further reading:

- James Gleik, *Chaos: The Amazing Science of the Unpredictable*

Aeschylus	(525-456 BCE) Believed to be the first Greek tragedy-writer (the first to write for two characters), though many of his plays are believed to have been lost, he is still celebrated for his *Oresteia* trilogy and *Prometheus Bound*.
Archimedes	(c. 287-c. 212 BCE) Ancient Greek mathematician, physicist, engineer and inventor. He calculated the value of *pi* and invented, amongst other things, the Archimedes' screw.
Aristotle	(384-322 BCE) Ancient Greek philosopher whose writings on poetics, metaphysics ethics, logic, politics have been hugely influential in western European thought.
Brown	Launcelot "Capability", (1715-1783), English landscape architect who designed the gardens at Kew and Blenheim Palace.
Brummell	George Bryan "Beau", (1778-1840), English "dandy" who began the fashion for men to wear understated, tailored clothes with cravats. A friend of King George IV, he is thought to be the originator of the modern suit worn with a tie.
Claude	Claude Lorrain, (1600-1682), French landscape painter.
Cleopatra	(69-30 BCE) Queen of Egypt, daughter of Ptolemy XII with whom she initially shared power. Latterly, she co-ruled with her husband-brothers Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV. She joined forces with Julius Caesar to overthrow her brother and gain sole sovereignty, later becoming Caesar's mistress. After the emperor's murder, she married Marc Antony whom she later married. They were defeated by Octavian in 31 BCE and both committed suicide.
Byron	George Gordon Sixth Baron Byron of Rochdale, (1788-1824), Romantic poet who was one of the leading figures of the Romantic Movement. He was notorious for his unconventional lifestyle and his numerous sexual liaisons; his mistress was Lady CAROLINE LAMB. He died in mainland Europe, having fought Greek independence from the Turkey. His works include *Manfred*, *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*.
Chippendale	Thomas, (1718-1779), English cabinet-maker whose style is recognized by flowing lines a rococo ornamentation.

Coleridge   Samuel Taylor, (1772-1834), English poet and a leader of the Romantic Movement, a writer of notable criticism on Shakespeare. He is probably most famous for his poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Dido   (sometimes known as Elissia) Dido is the fabled queen of Carthage. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, she falls in love Aeneas but, when Aeneas is instructed by the gods to journey away, she kills herself.

Elizabeth   Queen Elizabeth I, (1533-1603), Protestant queen of England who re-established the faith when she succeeded the Catholic Mary I. Daughter of Henry VIII, she famously remained a virgin. Her reign coincided with the Renaissance, a rediscover of classical culture and a time of massive developments in science, trade and culture.

Euripides   (c. 480-406 BCE) Ancient Greek playwright, his work is thought to be more realistic than that of AESCHYLUS and SOPHOCLES: *Iphigenia in Taurus, The Bacchae, Medea, Hippolytus* and *The Trojan Women.*

Fermat   Pierrre de, (1601-1665), a French mathematician credited with the early development of calculus and magistrate at the *Parlement* at Toulouse, France.

Fuseli   Henry, (1741-1825), Swiss-born British painter famous his grotesque and fantastic style, probably his most famous painting, *The Nightmare*, depicts a satanic creature upon a sleeping woman.

Galileo   (1564-1642), Italian astronomer, physicist and mathematician. Best known for being the first scientist to observe the sky through a telescope and for his support for Copernicus' theory that the Earth revolved around the Sun.

Lamb   Lady Caroline, (1785-1828), writer of *Glenarron*, *Graham Hamilton* and *Ada Reis,* wife of Viscount Melbourne and BYRON's mistress.

Lawrence   D. H., (1885-1930), English writer of fiction and criticism, possibly most famous for his novels which include *Sons and Lovers*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

Leibnitz   Gottfried Willhelm, (1646-1716), German philosopher and mathematician who invented calculus independently from Newton, his notation is used to date.

Lord Holland   Henry Richard Vassall Fox, 3rd Baron (1773-1840) was an English politician, an important member of the Whig party, and a writer. A statue of him stands in Holland Park, London.

Jeffrey	Francis, or Lord Jeffrey, (1773-1850), Scottish critic renowned for his dislike for Romantic poetry. He was co-founder and editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, which provided BYRON with ammunition for his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.
Milton	John, (1608-1674), English poet most famous for writing *Paradise Lost*, which narrates Satan's Fall from Grace and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. It is considered by some to be the greatest English epic.
Moore	Thomas, (1779-1852), Irish poet and biographer of Lord Byron.
Newton	Sir Isaac, (1642-1727), English mathematician and scientist who invented differential calculus. He also originated the theories of universal gravitation and the three laws of motion, the foundation of modern engineering. His theories asserted that the solar system does in fact orbit the sun.
Ovid	(43 BCE-17 CE) Roman poet, trained as a lawyer, known for his erotic and mythological poems including *Ars Amores* (The Art of Love) and *Metamorphoses*.
Peacock	Thomas Love, (1785-1866), English novelist and poet, friend to Shelly and a clerk of the East India Company.
Pericles	(c. 495 – 429 BCE) Ancient Athenian statesman: a fierce promoter of democracy, leading Thucydides to give him the epithet of 'the first citizen of Athens', and a staunch patron of the arts, which flourished during his time in power. Achievements of this Golden Age include Pericles' commission of the Parthenon.
Plautus	(c. 254-184 BCE) Roman poet and playwright famed for coarse comedies.
Radcliffe	Ann Ward, (1764-1823), English novelist considered a pioneer in the gothic style. Her works include *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, to which Henry James makes reference in his *The Turn of the Screw*.
Rogers	Samuel, (1763-1855), British poet: *The Pleasures of Memory*.
Rosa	Salvator, (1615-1673), Italian painter and poet known for his romantic depictions of wild landscapes as well as turbulent seascapes and battle scenes.
Scott	Sir Walter, (1771-1832), Scottish poet and novelist, the writer of *Ivanhoe* (1820) which is sometime credited for a renewal of interest in the Middle Ages during the nineteenth century.

Sophocles   (496-406 BCE) Greek tragedian whom ARISTOTLE credits with the addition of a third actor as well as increasing the size of the chorus, believed to have been responsible for the development of stage settings. His tragedies include *Oedipus Rex, Electra, The Women of Trachis, Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Southey   Robert, (1774-1843), English Romantic poet and scholar. In 1813 he was appointed Poet Laureate after Sir WALTER SCOTT declined the offer. Southey is the dedicatee of BYRON's *Don Juan*, in which dedication he is insulted for his poetry and his politics.

Thackeray   William Makepeace, (1811-1863), English novelist, the author of *Vanity Fair*.

Virgil   (70-19 BCE), Roman poet, writer of the epic *Aeneid* which recounts the journeys of Aeneas, starting with the fall of Troy and ending with the founding of Rome. Also the writer of *The Georgics* which established the classical pastoral tradition.

Walpole   Horace, 4th Earl of Orford, (1717-97), writer of the Gothic romance *The Castle of Oranto*. His Gothicized villa, Strawberry Hill, London, is credited with starting the picturesque fashion in landscape design; it featured in the BBC's *Restoration* series in 2004.

Wordsworth   William, (1770-1852), English poet, a founder of the Romantic movement. He co-wrote *Lyrical Ballads* with COLERIDGE and was made Poet Laureate in 1843.