The Critic & The Real Inspector Hound

First Folio
Teacher and Student Resource Guide
Consistent with the Shakespeare Theatre Company’s central mission to be the leading force in producing and preserving the highest quality classic theatre, the Education Department challenges learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern perceptions. We hope that this First Folio: Teacher and Student Resource Guide will prove useful to you while preparing to attend The Critic & The Real Inspector Hound.

First Folio provides information and activities to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production. First Folio contains material about the playwrights, their world and their works. Also included are approaches to explore the plays and productions in the classroom before and after the performance.

First Folio is designed as a resource both for teachers and students. All Folio activities meet the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” and “Knowledge of Language” requirements for the grades 8-12 Common Core English Language Arts Standards. We encourage you to photocopy these articles and activities and use them as supplemental material to the text.

Enjoy the show!

The First Folio Teacher and Student Resource Guide for the 2015-2016 Season was developed by the Shakespeare Theatre Company Education Department:

Director of Education Samantha K. Wyer
Associate Director of Education Dat Ngo
Audience Enrichment Manager Hannah Hessel Ratner
Community Engagement Manager Laura Henry Buda
School Programs Manager Vanessa Hope
Training Programs Manager Brent Stansell
Education Coordinator Jared Shortmeier
Resident Teaching Artist Renea Brown
Education Fellow Thanh Nguyen

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Mr. Dangle, a gentleman and well-known critic in London, is reading the newspaper and talking to his wife. Mrs. Dangle thinks that her husband’s job with the theatre is getting out of hand. There is always a group of terrible actors, mediocre directors and sad sounding singers in their home, vying for Mr. Dangles’ approval and assistance. They argue until two actresses arrive to perform for Mr. Dangle, proving Mrs. Dangle’s point. With them arrives Mr. Sneer, a fellow critic and friend of Mr. Dangle.

Mr. Sneer discusses the good and bad elements of theatre and how the public reacts to them. Sir Fretful Plagiary, a horrible playwright who doesn’t take criticism well, also arrives at Mr. Dangle’s house. Fretful tells his friends that he has submitted his play to a theatre but is afraid someone may steal his work – even though he tends to do this himself in his plays. Sneer harshly taunts him for this idea.

Mr. Dangle’s servant tells him his friend, Mr. Puff, is waiting to come up. Puff enters and Dangle introduces Sneer and Puff to each other. Sneer asks Puff what he does for a living and Puff talks about how he is a jack of all trades. He is a writer, a playwright and a critic all in one. He practices the “art of puffing,” meaning he attempts to influence people’s actions through writing. Puff explains that he writes reviews about shows before they go up, just to get people to attend.

Puff has written a play called *The Spanish Armada* and is hoping to present it at the famous Drury Lane Theatre. To accomplish this, he needs to convince Richard Sheridan, the theatre manager, to produce it. Sneer tells him Sheridan will be at the theatre to see his rehearsal that afternoon, but Dangle knows Sneer is lying. Sneer then offers to join Puff, along with Dangle, at the rehearsal for the play and give some feedback that is sure to impress Sheridan.

At the rehearsal, Puff begins to direct his actors. Sneer and Dangle make outrageous suggestions of changes to make, assuring Puff that it will amaze Mr. Sheridan. Puff goes to great lengths to make sure everything is perfect, changing characters, re-writing the script, even altering set pieces. The show goes from bad to a complete mess. Sneer and Dangle enjoy meddling with the play and mocking Puff, but they are in for a surprise at the play’s finish.

Two theatre critics, Moon and Birdboot, are attending a play. On the set for the performance, a dead body is visible. Birdboot approaches Moon and asks why Moon is there instead of Higgs, the first-string critic. Moon answers by complaining that he only exists when Higgs is not available and laments being second-string.

They discuss the play that is about to begin, a “whodunit” mystery. Birdboot anticipates seeing one of the lead actresses, with whom he seems to be infatuated.

The play begins onstage. Mrs. Drudge, the housekeeper, enters and listens to a radio report about an escaped madman who is on the run nearby. Inspector Hound is leading the search in the marshes around Muldoon Manor. Mrs. Drudge begins to clean and Moon and Birdboot continue their conversation in the audience. Moon references rumors about Birdboot’s affairs with actresses and Birdboot takes offense. Onstage, Mrs. Drudge moves the couch to clean and unknowingly covers the dead body. The phone rings and she responds to the caller, explaining that Lady Muldoon and her guests are cut off from the outside world, including Magnus, “the wheel-chair ridden half-broth of her ladyship’s husband Lord Albert Muldoon who ten years ago went out for a walk on the cliffs and was never seen again.”

Mrs. Drudge spots Simon Gascoyne attempting to sneak into the house. He introduces himself as a friend of Lady Muldoon and Felicity Cunningham. He asks for Lady Muldoon and Mrs. Drudge says she is out playing tennis with Ms. Cunningham and goes to fetch them. In the audience, Moon muses that he is waiting for Higgs to die so he can become first-string critic, and wonders if the third-string, Puckeridge, is waiting for him to die too.
Felicity enters and is shocked to see Simon. They have an ongoing love affair and she thinks he is there to visit her, but he explains that there is someone else. She leaves in a rage, exclaiming “I'll kill you for this, Simon Gascoyne!” As she exits, Moon realizes that he saw Birdboot out with the actress playing Felicity. Birdboot denies this as slander and is outraged at the implication that his reviews might be tainted. Then Lady Muldoon enters and Birdboot is immediately smitten with her instead.

Onstage, Simon professes his love for Cynthia (Lady Muldoon), but Cynthia insists she is still in love with her dead husband and resists his advances. Simon says he will kill anyone who comes between them. Magnus and Felicity arrive to play cards. Magnus also courts Cynthia’s love and vows to kill Simon if he comes between them. They set up to play cards and the couch is moved to reveal the dead body, though still none of the characters notice it. During the game, each becomes suspicious of the other characters’ love affairs and loyalties. Felicity and Magnus each leave with veiled threats to Simon. Cynthia accuses Simon of having an affair with Felicity. He assures her the relationship is over, but Cynthia threatens to kill Simon if he is untrue to her. Mrs. Drudge overhears this threat and the first act ends.

Moon and Birdboot talk at cross-purposes, Moon obsessing over Higgs and Birdboot over the actress playing Cynthia. The play begins again with Magnus, Cynthia and Felicity having coffee. The radio alerts them to the fact that the madman is in the immediate vicinity of Muldoon Manor. They realize Simon is missing and then Inspector Hound arrives at their door. He asks a series of confusing questions about the madman until he stumbles on the corpse, finally revealing it to the rest of the characters. They all agree that Simon fits the description of the madman and Hound vows to find him. They also realize that they have no idea of the identity of the dead body. Everyone leaves to search the house and Simon enters. He looks at the face of the body and stands in alarm. There is a shot and he falls dead. The rest of the characters return and Hound shares that Simon could not have been the killer because the body was there before he arrived. End of Act Two.

Moon muses that it might actually be quite easy to get away with murder, and speculates how he might kill Higgs. Birdboot speculates how he might get away with an affair with the actress. Suddenly, the phone rings on the empty stage. No one answers, so Moon goes onstage and picks it up. The call is for Birdboot, from his wife Myrtle. As he hangs up, Felicity enters and begins an earlier scene, treating Birdboot as if he were Simon. Birdboot is bewildered but the scene continues. Moon tries to get him to sit down but Birdboot stays onstage, excited to meet Cynthia. He plays the love scene with her and then stays onstage to be near her as the play continues.

They reach the end of the card game and Cynthia exits, threatening Simon once again. Moon makes one last effort to fetch Birdboot back, but Birdboot doesn’t care. He looks at the body and suddenly realizes it is Higgs, the first-string critic. He is dead. Moon is flabbergasted, realizing he got his wish. Birdboot has a sudden realization and all becomes clear, but before he can speak he is shot dead. Moon runs onstage and Cynthia enters, addressing Moon as Inspector. Moon turns to her and then sees Simon and Hound sitting in the critics’ former seats in the audience.

Onstage, the characters treat Moon as Inspector Hound as he struggles to find out what happened. He tries to solve the mystery and finally comes up with a wildly far-fetched explanation. The other characters don’t believe it, and Magnus accuses Moon of being the dangerous madman, masquerading as Inspector Hound. They declare Moon to be the killer and Magnus removes his disguise and reveals himself to be the real Inspector Hound – whom Moon recognizes as the third-string critic, Puckeridge. Moon tries to run but is shot dead by Magnus/Hound/Puckeridge, who reveals he is also secretly Albert, Cynthia’s dead husband.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Character in <em>The Critic</em></th>
<th>Character in <em>Real Inspector Hound</em></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Ahlin</td>
<td>Dangle</td>
<td>Birdboot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A well respected critic, easily swayed by flattery.</td>
<td>A lead theatre critic attending a murder-mystery play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Stanton</td>
<td>Puff</td>
<td>Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A critic and playwright.</td>
<td>A second-string theatre critic, attending the same play.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Dorfman</td>
<td>Sneer</td>
<td>Real Inspector Hound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A well respected critic, blunt and frank with his critiques.</td>
<td>A policeman leading the search for a madman on the loose around Muldoon Manor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naomi Jacobson</td>
<td>Mrs. Dangle</td>
<td>Mrs. Drudge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife of Dangle, values actual news and world events over the theatre.</td>
<td>The housekeeper at Muldoon Manor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Catron</td>
<td>Plagiary/Actor 4</td>
<td>Simon Gascoyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A playwright who steals from other authors.</td>
<td>A strange man who appears at Muldoon Manor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Character in <em>The Critic</em></td>
<td>Character in <em>Real Inspector Hound</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Charity Jones</td>
<td>Signora Décolleté/Actress 1 An opera singer. Comes to Dangle’s house to perform for him. / A different actress performing in Puff’s show.</td>
<td>Cynthia Lady of Muldoon Manor. Secretly involved with Simon Gascoyne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Nees</td>
<td>Servant/Prompter</td>
<td>Magnus The half-brother of Lady Muldoon's late husband Lord Albert Muldoon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra Struthers</td>
<td>Miss Buxom/Actress 2 Arrives at Dangle’s house to perform for him. / A different actress performing in Puff’s show.</td>
<td>Felicity A guest of Lady Muldoon. Formerly involved with Simon Gascoyne.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Original author of *The Critic*

Along with Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, William Congreve, and his contemporary Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) was born in Ireland. The secret history of English comedy, it seems, passes through the emerald isle. Born in Dublin in 1751, Sheridan belonged to a theatrical family. His grandfather knew Jonathan Swift, his father acted at the Smock Alley Theatre, and his mother Frances had plays produced at the Drury Lane by famous actor-manager David Garrick. Recent scholarship suggests young Richard learned much from his mother’s work.

The Sheridans moved to London and later Bath, where nineteen-year-old Richard fell in love with Elizabeth Linley. The couple eloped to a monastery in France, Sheridan returning to England to fight two duels on Elizabeth’s behalf with a Welsh squire, Thomas Matthews. After healing, Sheridan broke with his father’s wishes and moved to London. His first play, *The Rivals*, appeared in 1775, written at the tender age of 24.

*The Rivals* was a first-night flop and, after hasty revisions and recasting, a resounding success. It has since entered the classical repertoire. Though characters have comically mangled the English language since the days of Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, it was Sheridan who gave the trait a local habitation and a name by way of Mrs. Malaprop. Sheridan followed with *The Duenna*, a collaboration with his father-in-law, composer Thomas Linley. A ballad opera, the piece would run for 75 performances, breaking the record 62 of John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728).

Recognizing the young man’s meteoric rise, David Garrick sold his controlling share of Drury Lane to Sheridan and Linley in 1776. The next year, Sheridan unveiled his masterpiece, *The School for Scandal*, a brilliantly conceived satire of the late 18th century “information economy.” In 1779, with Scandal still outdrawing other plays, Sheridan produced *The Critic*, his third brilliant comedy in a row. Like Scandal, *The Critic* offers a glimpse at Sheridan’s managerial cunning, calling attention to and simultaneously embodying the manner in which playwrights manipulate audiences with silly plots, extravagant special effects, and stunning spectacle.

In 1780, Sheridan entered Parliament as a Whig politician. Regarded as the best political orator of his day, he would hold his seat until 1807. After the Drury Lane Theatre burned down in 1809, Sheridan was plunged into financial distress, dying in 1815. He was buried in the Poets’ Corner at Westminster Abbey, his funeral attended by dukes, earls, lords and viscounts. As Lord Byron wrote of his older friend in 1813: “Whatever Sheridan has done has been par excellence, always the best of its kind.”

Jeffrey Hatcher

Adaptor of *The Critic*

Jeffrey Hatcher is an award-winning writer for stage, screen, and television. He wrote the book for the Broadway musical *Never Gonna Dance*. His original plays and adaptations include *Three Viewings*, *A Picasso*, *Scotland Road*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Tuesdays with Morrie* (with Mitch Albom), *Ten Chimneys*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club*, *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, *Mrs. Manerly*, *Murderers*, *Ella*, *Mercy of a Storm*, *Smash*, *Armadale*, *Korczak’s Children*, *To Fool the Eye*, *The Falls*, *A Piece of the Rope*, *Louder Faster*, *What’s the Word For*, *John Gabriel Borkman*, *Brand*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Pillars of Society*, *The Government Inspector*, *The Good Soldier*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and others at hundreds of theatres in the U.S. and abroad. His most recent adaptation is John Kennedy Toole’s *A Confederacy of Dunces*, starring Nick Offerman as “Ignatius J. Reilly.”

He has written screenplays for the films *The Duchess* with Keira Knightley and Ralph Fiennes, *Casanova* with Heath Ledger and Sienna Miller, *Stage Beauty* with Billy Crudup and Claire Danes, and, most recently,
Mr. Holmes, starring Ian McKellen. He has also written episodes of “Columbo,” “The Mentalist,” and the TV movie, “Murder at the Cannes Film Festival.”

His awards and grants include: NEA, TCG, Lila Wallace Fund, 2013 IVEY Lifetime Achievement Award, Rosenthal New Play Prize, Frankel Award, Charles MacArthur Fellowship Award, Edgerton Grant, McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Barrymore Award Best New Play (A Picasso), and L.A. Critics Circle Award Best Adaptation (Cousin Bette). He is a member and/or alumnus of The Playwrights Center, the Dramatists Guild, the Writers Guild, and New Dramatists.

About the Authors

Tom Stoppard

Author of The Real Inspector Hound

In a more than 50-year career, Tom Stoppard (1937-) has established himself as perhaps England’s greatest living playwright. The funny thing is, like many previous members of the club, he’s not English at all. Born to a secular Jewish family in Czechoslovakia, the boy named Tomáš Straussler spent his early life as a war refugee, in flight from eastern Europe to Singapore to India, where his widowed mother married British Army Major Kenneth Stoppard. Stoppard has credited this gifted English identity with a deep but subtle sense of alienation. Most of the characters in his plays have multiple identities, and he favors the dramatic action of the metaphysical quest, the search for meaning and identity in a world of chaotic collisions.

After attending posh preparatory schools which he detested, Stoppard left school at 17 to work as a journalist. (He never attended university.) He moved to London in the early 1960s, during which time he wrote a series of intricate radio dramas and an experimental novel, Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon (1966). That same year, Stoppard broke through to international acclaim with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, which eventually transferred to the National Theatre and a Broadway run, winning the Tony Award in 1968.

Stoppard’s works over the ensuing decade would be marked by formal daring and a formidable range of reference. Jumpers (1972), for example, combines moral philosophy with a murder mystery, while Travesties (a Tony Award winner in 1975) mashes up Tristan Tzara, James Joyce, and Vladimir Lenin with The Importance of Being Earnest. (Lenin, of course, is Lady Bracknell.) At their best, these plays achieve the seemingly impossible, reconciling the avant-garde breakthroughs of Beckett and Pirandello with the best of the English tradition, including Shakespeare, Shaw, and Wilde.

In the late 70s and early 80s, Stoppard gravitated increasingly to political commentary, attacking Soviet political repression in Every Good Boy Deserves Favor (1977), Professional Foul (1978), and Squaring the Circle (1984). He won his third Tony in 1984 with The Real Thing, a work touching on themes of adultery and self-deception. In the decades since, in works such as Arcadia (1993), The Invention of Love (1997), and the multi-evening epic The Coast of Utopia (receiving his fourth Tony, in 2006), Stoppard has increasingly synthesized moral passion with technical dazzle.

Stoppard is also a preeminent translator and adaptor, reintroducing works into the canon by authors such as Nestroy, Molnár, Schnitzler, Havel, and Pirandello. He is an accomplished Hollywood screenwriter, having won an Oscar for his contribution to Shakespeare in Love (1998) and a nomination for Brazil (1985). Tales of his uncredited work as a script doctor are legendary. He was knighted in 1997, and awarded the Order of Merit in 2000.
I, Critic
By Jeffrey Hatcher

I was a critic once. It was forty years ago. I wrote book and movie reviews for my high school newspaper. The only pieces I remember are ones of John le Carré’s novel *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, and the disaster flick *The Towering Inferno*. I liked giving my opinion – yea on *Tinker, Tailor*, nay on *Inferno* - and had no qualms about tearing apart work executed by professionals, a courageous critical stance enhanced by the certainty that my targets didn’t read *The High Times*. Since they were relegated to cultural backwaters like London and Hollywood, there was little chance of running into le Carré at the club, or that Steve McQueen would show up at my door to punch me out. Adding to my assurance was the fact that I had no conflicts of interest that could call my motives into question. I harbored no aspirations to write spy novels or disaster movies. I was impeccably above the fray.

I didn’t write about plays because there weren’t any plays to review in Steubenville, Ohio, except in high school, and I acted in those. I knew it was unethical to praise my performance as Jack in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, even under the pseudonym “Bunbury.” Consequently I never encountered the dilemma – at least I imagine it’s a dilemma – faced by the theatre critic: how to respond to a live performance of a play, knowing that my opinion may alter its subsequent performances, not to mention its future. You can always tell when reading a review has done damage to a show. Actors’ previously unacknowledged subtleties begin to announce themselves. Audience responses (laughter, applause, standing ovations) are divided into “Before the Reviews” and “After the Reviews.”

My career as a critic was brief: two years, tops. My career as a playwright has lasted longer. I’ve received reviews that were pans, raves, mixed, and shrugs. I think I’ve grown a thicker skin, but I always believe the bad reviews and think the good ones were written by my mother. Criticism has a power over me that I can’t shake, especially theater criticism. I seldom had the chance to see the plays I read about in newspapers and magazines. This was the era of theater critics like Walter Kerr, Brendan Gill, and Edith Oliver. Years later I became friendly with Edith and even shared her little airplane liquor bottles in my car, but it felt like I was driving with a fictional character. I read about but never saw plays like *Travesties, Follies, Equus,* and *No Man’s Land,* so the reviews were my only experience of them. Even films, which I could see, took up to three months to arrive in the boonies, and since I always read the reviews as soon as they came out in New York or L.A., the movie often felt like an afterthought, mere confirmation of what had been written by Jack Kroll, Vincent Canby, Andrew Sarris, and – most particularly – Pauline Kael, whose prose was so electric, in praise or disdain, that it was seared into my brain.

Because of this, I can’t escape the nagging conviction that the critic’s opinion is real, whereas the show isn’t. The review, printed in ink, burned into paper in intimidating fonts, is lasting in ways plays and performances, ephemeral and subject to the vagaries of production, can never be. I know it isn’t healthy, but I’m not the only playwright who thinks this. It’s one of the reasons we love to write about critics. It’s our only revenge. Playwrights and screenwriters have defined the critic in ways no critic has ever come close to. Our image of the erudite, scathing, and witty taste-maker comes from Sheridan Whiteside in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, Waldo Lydecker in *Laura*, Addison DeWitt in *All About Eve*, and, before them all, Mr. Puff, along with his comrades Snee and Dangle, in *The Critic*...

And Puff? Did Sheridan write him as an overblown cartoon, a huge bubble made up of every sin a playwright could imagine of a critic? Yes. And for his crimes, what punishment does Sheridan hand down to Puff? The Critic decides to become a Playwright.

Only one who knows could devise such a hell.
Tom Stoppard: An Introduction

By Victor L. Cahn, Associate Professor of English

Tom Stoppard's playwriting career embodies a fascinating clash of opposites. In an interview, he once said, "I don't write plays for discussion." Yet his writings have been the subject of dozens of academic books and hundreds of critical articles. He has also commented "I've never felt...that art is important." Yet many of his characters continually ponder the significance of theater, indeed, the significance all the arts, as part of a perpetual search for meaning.

He is regarded as the most intellectual dramatist of our time, and his works are permeated with cultural allusions and a remarkable depth of scholarship in a dizzying array of fields. Yet his formal education ended after the second year of high school. Finally, despite Stoppard's stature as a "serious" playwright, his writings overflow with fun: parodies, puns, and verbal byplay across multiple languages.

To encapsulate the work of any artist in a few paragraphs is difficult. One place to begin with Stoppard, however, is to recognize that after he left school at the age of seventeen, he worked for a few years as a journalist, including several months as a drama critic. This career seems to have inspired in him an almost scientific curiosity about people's behavior, a fascination with how they attempt to maintain personal, emotional, and intellectual balance as they wander through the uncertainties of life. Indeed, the main characters in virtually all his plays conduct a perpetual struggle to affirm their beliefs and values in a bewildering world.

Nowhere is this theme more evident than in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967), Stoppard's first international success. Here he dramatizes the plight of two peripheral characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as they meander in and out of the turmoil that ravages the Danish court of Elsinore. The two men are unaware that Prince Hamlet has been ordered by his father's Ghost to revenge the murder of this father, the King, at the hands of Claudius, now ruler of Denmark and husband of Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. Nor have they any sense of the social, political, religious, and sexual implications of this crisis. All they know is that they have been summoned to discover why Hamlet, their old school chum, seems so distressed. Stoppard weaves scenes from Shakespeare with his own sparkling dialogue, creating a memorable portrait of two little men who seek to understand a world hopelessly beyond their ken.

From time to time, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern encounter some Players who entertain at Hamlet's court, and at those moments, the two lost souls tend to regard themselves as actors on the stage of life. This theme is developed further in one of Stoppard's most successful short plays, *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968), in which two theater critics, casually reviewing a preposterous thriller, are drawn reluctantly into the conflict onstage. On one level, *Hound* is a delightful spoof of critical jargon and the pomposity that characterizes Stoppard's former profession. Yet more subtly it suggests how any of us, thinking ourselves safe from the hubbub of the world, may nonetheless be whisked unwillingly and even fatally into the chaos.

Victor L. Cahn is Associate Professor of English at Skidmore College and author of *Beyond Absurdity: The Plays of Tom Stoppard*. The full article can be found at http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/theater/productions/arcadia/stoppard.html.
There is more to being a theatre critic than seeing a performance and writing down your opinion. Here are some tips on how to be an excellent critic.

**Tip One: It’s not about good and bad.**
It’s very rare that a performance is entirely good or entirely bad. Instead of putting your thumbs up or down, think about why you liked or didn’t like something and try to explain your reasoning.

**Tip Two: You are not the artists.**
What you see on stage may not match what you wish you saw on stage. But the artist who made the piece may have been trying something else entirely. Instead of dismissing something because it’s not what you expected, try to ask yourself: What was the artist trying to do? And did they accomplish their goal?

**Tip Three: But your writing is an art.**
Think about active concise words to share your thoughts. A review is not a report; feel free to be creative in your descriptions!

**Tip Four: Truth helps.**
As a critic you have a responsibility both to your readers and the artists. Being truthful about your experience will help you gain trust among both your readers and the artists you write about.

**Tip Five: Lead them in.**
You only have a sentence or two to grab your reader’s attention before they turn to something else. Use your first two sentences to intrigue or excite your reader and be clear about what you want to get across.

**Tip Six: Name names.**
Don’t forget to name the artists who worked on the show. If you liked the costumes, name the designer. If you liked a character, don’t forget to highlight the actor’s name.

**Tip Seven: Read.**
If you are really interested in writing criticism the best way to learn is by reading reviews. And you don’t need to limit yourself to theatre: music, film and even video game reviews will help you grow as a writer.

**Activity:** Write a review of Shakespeare Theatre Company’s production. Or, write a review of a movie you’ve seen recently. Be sure to keep all the above tips in mind.
An adaptation is when a book or play is reworked and altered or adjusted by a new artist. Sometimes the goal is to appeal to a current audience, modernize language, or to emphasize particular themes. The level of change to the original text can vary a great deal. Some writers stick close to every word; others use the original only as inspiration. In 1779, Richard Sheridan wrote *The Critic, Or, a Tragedy Rehearsed* as an attack on critics, as well as theatrical mannerisms, theatre lovers, actors and how seriously theatre people can take themselves. Jeffery Hatcher has been commissioned to adapt *The Critic* for the Shakespeare Theatre Company to re-think the production to make it into a one act play.

Below is a comparison of text from the original version and the adapted version:

1. Which page is the original version? Which is the adapted version? Why?
2. Why do you think the changes are necessary?
3. Would you prefer to see the original version of the play or the adapted version?

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“Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee.”

SNEER
Haven’t I heard that line before?

DANGLE
I think there’s something like it in “Othello.”

PUFF
It does not signify! Two authors happened to hit upon the same line, and Shakespeare made use of it first!

SNEER
But, here, stop a moment. What does the line mean? “Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee.” The language is rather antiquated.

PUFF
It’s Shakespeare.

SNEER
Sheridan doesn’t like Shakespeare.

BEEFEATER. Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee.

SNEER. Haven’t I heard that line before?

PUFF. No, I fancy not. Where, pray?

DANGLE. Yes, I think there is something like it in Othello.

PUFF. Gad! now you put me in mind on’t, I believe there is: but that’s of no consequence—all that can be said is, that two people happened to hit upon the same thought—and Shakespeare made use of it first, that’s all.

SNEER. Very true.

PUFF. Now, sir, your soliloquy—but speak more to the pit, if you please—the soliloquy always to the pit, that’s a rule.
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<th><strong>Acoustics</strong></th>
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<th><strong>THEATRICAL GLOSSARY</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>the total effect of sound in a theatre</td>
<td>a division or unit of a theatre piece (where one part begins and ends)</td>
<td>a statement that refers to something without mentioning it directly</td>
<td>the character opposing the main character of the play</td>
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<tr>
<td>the artistic leader of a theatre company</td>
<td>words spoken by an actor which are not &quot;heard&quot; by the other characters</td>
<td>an actor’s movement around a set</td>
<td>the actors in a play</td>
<td>the process of choosing the actors for a play</td>
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<tr>
<td>the outcome of a complex sequence of events</td>
<td>a reciprocal conversation between two or more persons; the speaking lines of a script</td>
<td>the person who leads a show; usually has the final say</td>
<td>the front of the stage; in the direction of the audience.</td>
<td>the author of a play</td>
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<th><strong>Farce</strong></th>
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<th><strong>House</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lighting Designer</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>a final section or speech after the main part of a play or musical composition</td>
<td>a light dramatic composition marked by broadly satirical comedy and improbable plot</td>
<td>a room in a theater or studio in which performers can relax when they are not performing</td>
<td>the theatre, the people in the theatre, the audience</td>
<td>the person who decides where the lights should go, what color, and which ones should be on at any particular time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>suspenseful, plot-oriented drama featuring all-good heroes, all-bad villains</td>
<td>a word or phrase that compares one kind of object or idea used in place of another</td>
<td>a set of lines spoken by one person either directly addressing the audience or another character</td>
<td>the storyline of a play developed through an unfolding of a series of events</td>
<td>the person or organization that funds the production</td>
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<th><strong>Prompter</strong></th>
<th><strong>Proscenium</strong></th>
<th><strong>Protagonist</strong></th>
<th><strong>Run</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>a speech often in verse addressed to the audience by an actor at the beginning of a play</td>
<td>the person who assists an actor by suggesting or saying the next words of a forgotten line</td>
<td>the boundary between the stage and the audience in a conventional theatre</td>
<td>the main character; the hero or heroine</td>
<td>the number of times a show is performed</td>
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<th><strong>Scene</strong></th>
<th><strong>Script</strong></th>
<th><strong>Simile</strong></th>
<th><strong>Soliloquy</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>the location of the play, indicated by the set designed by the set designer</td>
<td>a division of an act presenting continuous action in one place</td>
<td>the text of the dialogue and stage directions of a play</td>
<td>comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as.</td>
<td>long speech that a character in a play makes to an audience and that reveals the character's thoughts</td>
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<th><strong>Staging</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>instruction in the text of a play, indicating the movement, position or tone of an actor, or design</td>
<td>the side of the stage on the left when facing the audience</td>
<td>the side of the stage on the right when facing the audience</td>
<td>the blocking of actors on stage, done mostly by the director</td>
<td>the rear part of a stage, away from the audience</td>
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Classroom Activities

Theatre Glossary Game

Preparation:
After students have reviewed the Theatre Glossary (on the previous page), they should be familiar with the terms. Split the students into teams of 4-6. Also, pick two students to be referees and one student to be the timer. Each referee should have a copy of all the terms and definitions.

Rules:
- Each word card has the word on the top of the card and the definition listed below.
- A student in the first team picks a card from the pile and does not show anyone.
- Each team’s turn lasts 30 seconds. The student must get their team to say the word on the card without using any part of the definition. If they guess the word, the team gets 1 point and the turn is over. If they don’t guess the word in time, the card goes back on the bottom of the pile and the next team takes a turn.
- If a student uses part of the definition, then the referees must sound the “buzzer” (or make a noise), and the team’s turn is over.
- Play is continued until all the cards are used.

Ready. Set. PLAY!
## Classroom Activities

### Parody

*The Real Inspector Hound* is a parody of an Agatha Christie murder mystery play. A parody is a humorous imitation of a particular genre, writer, or work of art.

1. Have your students work in small groups to choose a genre, writer, or work of art to parody (horror, Shakespeare, *The Simpsons*, etc.).

2. Have your students choose TWO characters from their subject. Students should list every character attribute they could imitate and exaggerate (i.e. for Homer Simpson, students might list: lazy, slow, powerless, beer belly, TV addict, etc.).

3. Using the subject and characters they’ve chosen have students write a scene.

4. Act out the scenes in class.

5. After each group performs, ask the other students to guess what the original work was.

### Satire

**Satire:** the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.

Satire is a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption by using humor, irony, exaggeration or ridicule. It intends to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. Fictional characters stand for real people and are intended to expose and condemn their corruption. A writer may point a satire toward a person, a country or even the entire world. Usually, it is a comical piece of writing which makes fun of an individual or a society to expose its stupidity and shortcomings.

1. What is the play *The Critic* satirizing? What do you think the playwright would like to improve or see changed?
2. Identify an example of irony in the play.
3. Identify an example of exaggeration.
4. Identify an example of ridicule.

### Theatre of the Absurd

**Theatre of the Absurd:** theater in which standard or naturalistic conventions of plot, characterization, and thematic structure are ignored or distorted in order to convey the irrational or false nature of reality and the essential isolation of humanity in a meaningless world.

1. What happens in the *Real Inspector Hound* that is outside reality? Give examples.
2. How could *Real Inspector Hound* be considered part of the Theatre of the Absurd?
Questions for Discussion

THE CRITIC:

- How do critics approach critiquing as a profession?
- How does The Critic challenge the concept of a theatre critic?
- How do the character names inform you of their character traits and types? (Like Mr. Puff, Mr. Fretful, Mr. Sneer, Mr. Dangle, Mrs. Dangle, Miss Buxom etc.)
- What is “Puffing”? What is a “puff piece”?
- Are there any modern professions that require the “art of puffing”?
- What is an adaptation?
- How do you judge the artistic quality of a work?

THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND:

- How does the presence of the body define this play?
- What is Moon upset about throughout the play? Why?
- How does the theme of “not seeing” relate to the work (in the setting and the dramatic action)?
- Why do Birdboot and Moon interject between scenes and how does this frame the structure?
- What surprises occurred in the play?
- As critics, Birdboot and Moon consider themselves to be outside and above the action of the play. How does their relationship with the play onstage change?
- Who killed who and how did each character relate to each other?
- What are some of the revelations that reflect the theme of disguise?
- What is reality and what is not?

OVERALL:

- Why do you think Critic and Real Inspector Hound were produced together? How do they relate to each other?
- In each play, are critics depicted in a positive or negative light? Give examples from both plays.
The phrase “theatre etiquette” refers to the special rules of behavior that are called for when attending a theatre performance.

Above all, it is important to remember that the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them. Be respectful of the actors and your fellow audience members by being attentive and observing the general guidelines below:

**Before you go:**

- *The Critic & The Real Inspector Hound* take place before cell phones and other fun technology existed. Please help us create the environment by turning off your cell phone and other electronic devices (iPods, games, etc.). Not only will it be historically inaccurate, but it can be very distracting, not to mention embarrassing, when a cell phone goes off during a performance. The lights from cell phones and other electronic devices are also a big distraction, so please no text messaging.

- We’re sure that you would never stick your gum underneath your chair or spill food and drinks, but because this theatre is so new and beautiful, we ask that you spit out your gum before entering the theatre and leave all food and drinks in the lobby or the coat check.

- We don’t want you to miss out on any of the action of the play, so please visit the restroom before the performance begins.

**During the performance:**

- Please feel free to have honest reactions to what is happening on stage. You can laugh, applaud and enjoy the performance. However, please don’t talk during the performance; it is extremely distracting to other audience members and the actors. Save discussions for intermission and after the performance.

**Thoughts about the importance of being an audience member from Shakespeare Theatre Company Artistic Director Michael Kahn**

“When you go to the theatre, you are engaging with other living, breathing human beings, having an immediate human response. In the theatre you sense that all of this may never happen again in this particular way.

As a member of the audience, you are actually part of how that’s developing—you have a hand in it … You are part of a community where you are asked to be compassionate, perhaps to laugh with or grieve as well as to understand people, lives and cultures different from your own.”