

Tom Stoppard's *The Hard Problem*: A Consideration

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Abstract Tom Stoppard's thirty-first theatrical play, *The Hard Problem* received its world premiere at the Dorfman Theatre, The National Theatre, on London's South Bank on 28 January 2015. This is Stoppard's first play for the theatre since his excursion into what might have been had his family had survived the Second World War and remained in what is now the Czech Republic, *Rock 'n' Roll* (2006). Receiving a hostile critical reception, *The Hard Problem* has much in common with Stoppard's concerns in his previous dramatic work: with choice and chance. Alistair Macaulay, writing about Stoppard's *The Invention of Love* (1997), astutely observes that "most or all Stoppard plays are about epistemology — about the various ways in which our brains apprehend and address the world, the range of possibilities whereby experience and thought become knowledge.... And the nature of knowledge — what has been lost, forgotten, mistaken? — is an abiding theme." Probably the first to appear in print in an academic journal, my account examines the eleven scenes of *The Hard Problem*, follows closely the evolution of its plot from an ethical critical perspective: the issues of why and how the characters in the play are in the situation in which they find themselves are amongst the elements that are emphasized.

Key words Stoppard; *The Hard Problem*; Ethical Criticism

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Tom Stoppard's latest theatrical play *The Hard Problem* received its world premiere at the Dorfman Theatre, The National Theatre, on London's South Bank on 28 January 2015. Running without an interval for about an hour and forty minutes it was Stoppard's first play for the theatre since his excursion in *Rock 'n' Roll* (2006) into what might have been had his parents remained in what is now the Czech Republic and survived the Second World War. He also used, as he does in *Rock 'n' Roll*, the music of Pink Floyd for his play for radio *Darkside* broadcast on BBC radio 26 August 2013.

The Hard Problem is Stoppard's thirty-first theatrical play and has much in common with its creator[']s concerns since his first play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967): chance, "choice," the roll of the dice determining what happens in life. His latest play received an overwhelmingly hostile critical response. One of the elements the critics objected to being far too many cultural, scientific, and literary references past and present, but those who know several of his plays realize that *The Hard Problem* is no different from other Stoppard plays in its intertextuality. This one works on different levels depending upon the audience's inter-textual awareness. Alistair Macaulay has written that most or all Stoppard plays are about epistemology — about the various ways in which our brains apprehend and address the world, the range of possibilities whereby experience and thought become knowledge.... And the nature of knowledge — what has been lost, forgotten, mistaken? — is an abiding theme."¹ In "First Person," his programme note to the National Theatre run, Stoppard writes that "*The Hard Problem* is what the Australian philosopher David Chalmers, called the mystery of consciousness; that is, the problem of explaining the phenomenon that we have subjective First Person experiences."² Or to express this differently is there anything that transcends the material in the sense of mind as brain?

In the opening scene of *The Hard Problem*, Spike the University lecturer who is having an affair with Hilary his younger student tells her "The game is not about you ... it's about a statistical tendency. It's about survival strategies hardwired into our brains millions of years ago"(4).³ The play explores dramatically this and other observations, assertions that for instance, to quote Spike again that "culture, empathy, faith, hope and charity, all the flip sides of egoism come back to biology" (7), do they? Hilary tells Spike that "Virtue"-whatever that is -"is not science. You can't get an *ought* out of an *is*. Morality is not science. So there must be something else, which isn't science. Which science isn't. What is it?" (15). Questions of this nature are Stoppard's preoccupation in *The Hard Problem*.

In *The Hard Problem* Stoppard grapples with fundamental human and

scientific questions. To cite the description of the play found on the back cover of the paperback edition: “Hilary, a young psychology researcher at a brain-science Institute, is nursing a private sorrow and a troubling question at work, where psychology and biology meet. If there is nothing but matter, what is consciousness?”

I am assuming that most of my readers will not be familiar with the play. So it seems appropriate to describe first in some detail the “plot” such as it is, “characters” such as they are, dramatic conflicts, if any, ideas that are presented, and ethical positions asserted.

At its beginning the designer Bob Crowley’s representation of the brain dominates the stage and Bach’s cerebral fugal music is heard. The lights then come up on “Twenty-two” year old Hilary, an undergraduate student, and her tutor Spike “about thirty” (3) — soon they will be lovers — who are arguing about game theory and rationality. Hilary is being prepared, coached for an interview at a prestigious Brain Institute. Hilary’s major is psychology, and her tutor/lover Spike a scientific materialist. While she believes in God and “the good,” Spike is engaged in a dualistic activity: at the same time as intellectually debating with her and coaching her, he is trying to get her into bed. Spike tells her — using unlikely words for a seduction- that “culture, empathy, faith, hope and charity, all the flip sides of egoism, come back to biology, because there just ain’t anywhere else to come from except three pounds of grey matter wired up in your head like a map of the London Underground with eighty-six billion stations connected thirty trillion ways, hard wired for me first” (7). This first scene, in common with the remainder of the play, is replete with ethical issues such as sleeping with a student, the nature of altruism, the nature of the rational. At the conclusion of this first scene Hilary “starts getting undressed” alone (7).

The second of eleven scenes opens with the opposite of ideas of the rational: “Hilary ...kneeling silently at the side of her bed, saying her prayers.” Spike enters “barefoot, wearing a girly wrap-over negligee too small for him, showing bare calves” (8). Clearly the two come together physically but their minds are far apart. The rest of the scene consists of their intellectual squabbling in some of the longest speeches or rather declarations of positions in the play: over “Forgiveness”; the techniques to be used to get accepted by the prestigious Kroll Institute for Brain Science, the research centre financed by a billionaire who has made his money in hedge-funds. Subjects discussed include “consciousness,” and what it is, “pain,” “sorrow,” what the brain is, intentions, survival reflexes, amongst other concerns. The scene concludes with Hilary crying and needing “a miracle” (8-16).

Scene three is set in “The Kroll Institute for Brain Science” (16) at which Hilary and Amal, a Cambridge educated Indian with a maths degree and working on a Master’s degree in biophysics, are being interviewed for it appears the same position. We learn that Hilary studied Psychology at Loughborough University—the name evoked laughter amongst the status conscious, clearly educated audience when I saw the play on the 7th April 2015 at London’s National Theatre. This wasn’t the only “in” reference and allusion to receive laughter or murmurs of recognition. Indeed a criticism of the play amongst the reviewers in the British “intellectual” newspapers, and journals such as *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and the *Times Literary Supplement* to name but three reviews,⁴ is that there is too much of this kind of name-dropping in the play and that “what’s presented is less drama than diagram” (*TLS*; February 6, 2015: 17). In this third scene between Hilary and her competitor Amal competition between them seems non-existent. There is little dramatic conflict between the two speakers: both are more representatives of ideas and status: she’s from Loughborough, perceived as third rate; he’s from the top of the academic pecking order — Cambridge; she is more unsettled about the ethics of the institute; he is a dedicated materialist. Information about them, their backgrounds is conveyed rather than their character traits.

This third scene includes as one of the interviewers, Julia, who was at school with Hilary. Coincidence is a dramatic device frequently found in Stoppard’s drama in addition to the collision of opposites which pervades his drama, from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), to *Jumpers* (1972 and beyond. To take three instances: in *Jumpers* musical comedy and moral philosophy are juxtaposed with acrobats and academic philosophers. There is the collision of the opposites of the surrealistic and the notions of realism in *Travesties* (1974). In the magnificent *Arcadia* (1993), probably the play of Stoppard’s that will last the longest, ideas of art and science shift between the early nineteenth century and the late twentieth century, and Newtonian physics is a bed fellow with Chaos theory. In *The Hard Problem* Julia reveals that Hilary whilst at school became pregnant, had a baby girl that she gave up for adoption. In such a decision—an ethical as well as pragmatic one— there is the pathos and sadness of *The Hard Problem*. Towards the conclusion of this third scene Jerry appears: the last lines of the scene revealing that his name is on the Institute for Brain Science building.

Via a stage direction, the audience learns in the fourth scene, that five years have gone by: Jerry enters, laughing into his cell phone. He is eating breakfast with his daughter Cathy whom the audience subsequently learns in the scene is adopted. The other character who actually appears in the scene as distinct from

being talked to on the phone is Amal. He nervously reminds his boss, who has told him that he pays him to keep quiet, that, in words reminiscent of Stoppard's personal sentiments on the stock market "the market is a belief system with a short memory, and it's averaged on highly correlated billion-dollar bets and trillions on side bets which are going to go wrong together. I mean to *zero*. You pay me for my research." Jerry confesses that his success depends upon "Confidence. Belief." He doesn't pay Amal "to post it like a fridge magnet on the reception desk." Amal responds "but I wasn't wrong." Jerry's response is "you were early, which is the same thing." Amal replies [rather shocked], "you're going short the market?" His boss's reaction is peremptory and contemptuous typical of his attitude to Amal, his employee whom he dismisses: "use the service stairs" (33-34). Stoppard distrusts the market and invested in property and art and other investment opportunities.⁵

This encounter at the end of the fourth scene between Amal and Jerry must strike a note to readers aware of for instance the 2015 dramatic swings and instability in the Chinese and other stock markets. Indeed one of the strengths of *The Hard Problem* is one the one hand Stoppard's ability to describe and to discuss pertinent ethical issues such as the challenge presented to us facing machines that are capable of wit, charm and resourcefulness and on the other hand Stoppard's uncanny ability to anticipate, to act as an old-fashioned seer or prophet. Indeed Jerry the highly successful capitalist of the play, in his reactions to his research assistant displays feeling and emotion. He doesn't totally act as a market manipulator but as a human with feelings, with sensibilities.

The fifth scene takes place in the working environment of the Institute with its employees staring at screens and "On a screen, Elaine, a young woman, is visibly and audibly reacting to receiving a series of [simulated] electric shocks." New characters are introduced: Leo an employee and another employee Bo described as "a young Chinese-American woman"(34) whom the audience learns towards the end of the scene graduated from Shanghai — the text doesn't indicate which University in that huge city — Caltech and also has a Master's degree from Cambridge in the UK. Bo is one of the few co-workers whom Hilary appears to communicate with and she exhibits sympathy to her point of view. Hilary for instance tells Bo that they are not "testing for empathy" but for "Motivation. Egoist motives and altruistic motives. Selfish and unselfish. There's a commonsense view that we're selfish by nature, and unselfish when we override our nature, basically by culture. What do you think?" Bo's response refers to "it's good to be good, I don't see that it matters what makes you good" to which Hilary replies "it might matter if people who are out for themselves think they're justified by biology" (39-

40).

In the meantime Jerry is on a tour of the building with his adopted daughter. Hilary is describing a child custody experiment she used to do at Loughborough involving parents from different backgrounds. This experiment led to the surprising result that the less well-off parents should be granted their custody. At the conclusion of the scene Hilary reasserts her belief that “It was a miracle” (43) that she gained employment at the Institute.

The sixth scene takes place “in an empty space”: Hilary and her old school friend Julia talk during a Pilates session. Julia tells Hilary that Jerry has an adopted daughter named Catherine of a similar age as the daughter Hilary had given up for adoption. She asks Hilary whether she misses her daughter. Hilary has not thought of her daughter for a long time and in any case “swapped her for a doctorate” (44), and tells Julia of her (Hilary’s) *need* to believe in God.

This sixth scene provides an illustration of the kind of aesthetical and ethical concerns that arise in coming to terms with this Stoppard drama. There is what may be perceived to be a pretentious reference to “Gödel’s Proof.” Ursula, a lesbian co-worker, appears at the scenes end and tells Hilary “You wouldn’t know Gödel’s Proof if it had suspender’s in Selfridge’s window” an apparent joke that fell flat at the matinee I attended. Ursula is responding to Hilary’s question to her: “Will you show me how Gödel’s Proof means a brain can’t be modelled on a computer?” (46).

In a newspaper interview with Camilla Turner published in the *Daily Telegraph* Tom Stoppard has expressed frustration with his current audiences and their sense of humour. He has had “to dumb down his jokes so that the audience understands them.” In a question and answer session with the director of *The Hard Problem*, Sir Nicholas Hytner, Stoppard observed that “It’s very rare to connect an audience except on a level which is lower than you would want to connect them on.” Additionally he commented “You could raise it a notch and you might lose an eighth of them. It’s to do with reference and allusion.” He changed a scene in *The Hard Problem* three times during its preview performances in order to make a specific allusion more and more evident on each occasion.⁶

Probably Stoppard hadn’t in mind the reference to the fashionable store Selfridges in London’s Regent Street. Whether Stoppard is specifically referring in his comments to the references to “Gödel’s Proof” is unclear. For those who don’t know, to put it very simply “Gödel’s ontological proof is a formal argument for God’s existence by the mathematician Kurt Gödel (1906–1978)” (Wikipedia). Do we accept Stoppard’s position that he needs to dumb down his allusions, his

intertextuality or is he making “egotistical” assumptions that his previous audiences for instance got it when they watched his work and audiences watching his new play do not? The aesthetic/critical issue is that such references may appear pretentious, inserted and lack dramatic appeal: the ethical issues are that such references to fundamental concerns in ethics and the branch of philosophy dealing with ethics remain undeveloped in his drama and especially in *The Hard Problem*.

In *The Hard Problem* the setting is again changed. Scene seven is back to Hilary and Spike. This time they are together in Venice and in various states of dressing or undress. The scene opens with Hilary “saying her prayers” (47) and concludes with her weeping in the shower. She asks for Spike’s observations on a paper she has written. There are the usual Stoppard witticisms, rhetorical questions and topical allusions: is sex better at one University rather than another? Spike has moved from Loughborough to University College London. There is a prescient reference to a University College London Nobel prize winner and a celebration in his honour.⁷ Hilary restates her position in her explanation of her paper. Firstly that “materialism is in trouble”; secondly that “there is no science that says beauty is truth or truth beauty”; thirdly Hilary asks “what is to be done with the sublime if you’re proud to be materialist?”; fourthly “what does materialism remind you of? It’s a faith.” Spike’s reply is that “it’s pathetic to rely on a supreme being to underwrite what you call your values”(49). It emerges that Hilary is crying for the loss of her daughter now aged thirteen whom she conceived at the very immature age of fifteen. Hilary asks Spike to pray for Catherine, her daughter: Hilary hopes and wants the adoptive parents to be kind to her. Spike’s clearly selfish reaction is that prayer would be pointless. He is entrapped within his ego, as, to a lesser extent Hilary is in hers but she shows at least awareness for the welfare of another, Catherine.

The next scene, eight returns to the Institute and its computer screens. Hilary spells out the significance of the title of the play in the context of a discussion with Leo, who it subsequently emerges is her immediate boss, on the paper she presented in Venice. For Leo her paper was “about God.” For Hilary her paper was “about the hard problem. It says every theory proposed for the problem of consciousness has the same degree of demonstrability as divine intervention. So- psychologically- they’re equivalent.” Hilary’s attitude, she is informed by Leo, has cost her a promotion: “If you hadn’t outed yourself as a Cartesian dualist [a position that the mind and the body are not the same, are not identical] you could’ve ended up as a head of department” (55-56).

As Stoppard explains in his programme note “Hilary ... Is not even convinced

that the brain ‘causes’ consciousness. In the eyes of almost all scientists ... she is one of those sad cases known as a Naïve Sceptic-she can’t entirely let go of dualism, the idea that the mind, far from being able to be reduced to functions of the brain, is something standing alone, something to be put to one side from physical brain science.” Stoppard continues that “Hilary ... is not much exercised by the consciousness of sensation (the five senses): her ‘problem’ is the foundation of morality, of ethics, of aesthetics, of ‘the good’; in short, of value.” As Stoppard reminds his readers, and audience, the concern, the question “what is so *good* about Good?” is too an essential one preoccupying George the professor of moral philosophy in his earlier play *Jumpers* (1972). So for Stoppard the issue is far from being a new one.

Reaction to Stoppard’s new play has focused on the ideas and explanation of Galen Strawson who discusses the issue of what he describes as the “consciousness myth” and its history in a lengthy commentary in the *TLS*, February 27, 2015. Naturally his explanation led to subsequent letters and responses⁸ which steered far away from the actual text of Stoppard’s play. For Strawson, “Tom Stoppard’s ‘hard problem’ may be the hardest there is — but it certainly is not new.” In his concluding paragraph Strawson writes that Hilary “challenges her amorous tutor Spike to explain consciousness and insists that ‘when you come right down to it, the body is made of things’ — she means physical *things* — ‘and things don’t have thoughts.’ There is, however, no good reason to think that this last thing is true, and overwhelming reason to think it’s false” (*TLS* February 27, 2015: 14-15).

Yet there are other “hard problems” presented in Stoppard’s play apart from the problem of consciousness and its explanation. Scene eight concludes with Leo’s explanation of “a trader’s appetite for risk” as if he is defending the risk taking upon which his boss’ Empire was founded and which sustains his livelihood. A threnody reverberating through Stoppard’s play is indeed the question of the ethical nature of capitalist adventurism and risk taking “in a roller-coaster market” (57).

Such a concern spills into scene nine which takes place at Hilary’s flat where she is holding a dinner party. The scene is divided into two sections. In the first Amal, Julia, Bo and Spike respond to Ursula’s question concerning “what a hedge fund does.” For Spike it’s a gamble in which the only winner can be Jerry if the money is invested in Kroll Capital Management. For Bo “the ultimate motivation is that banking regulations don’t apply to hedge-funds.” With Hilary’s entrance the subject moves to the reason for the dinner party which is to celebrate Bo’s initial publication that appeared in the “Journal of Cognitive Studies.” There is actually a *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* but it appears not a “Journal of Cognitive

Studies” — providing another example of Stoppard’s inventions.⁹ Bo is one of three authors on the subject of “Ultimate Goods.”

In the ensuing discussion Ursula observes that “Hilary makes altruism sound as if it has something to do with morality” which leads to observations on the meaning of “altruism” that include Amal’s comment that the word “just means increasing someone else’s fitness at the expense of your own.” Discussion then turns to the various experiments described in the journal article that purport to show that for instance “six-year-olds are nicer than eight-year-olds” (63-64) and so on. In the second half of the scene there is a rare moment of physical engagement in the play when Ursula punches in the face a very drunk Spike (65). Almost as a reaction to such overt emotional behavior, Bo goes outside the room to smoke. Her self-confidence having been thoroughly undermined, she talks to Hilary who realizes that Bo, has rigged or skewed the data in her published paper. Hilary takes responsibility for the deceptive “error” that is [really] not hers. Inside Hilary’s flat/apartment, at the end of the scene, a drunken Amal is holding forth “on the computer models which are supposed to manage risk.” He confesses that “every now and then, the markets behavior becomes irrational, as though it’s gone mad, or fallen in love. It doesn’t compute. It’s only computers compute” (69).

So the concerns of *The Hard Problem* include human responsibility for error, altruism and egoism, emotion, the limitations of the computer, financial speculation. All may be viewed as differing sides of the coin-to use a metaphor from the opening of Stoppard’s early great play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*- of the “consciousness” debate-*the* hard problem! Following the relatively lengthy ninth scene the remaining two scenes are brief and both set in Hilary’s office.

In the first, scene ten, Leo enters and presents Hilary with the evidence that the test data in the published paper have been falsified. To repeat, Hilary takes responsibility for what has occurred although she is not the initial first author. Her reasons for taking responsibility may be perceived as due to her empathy towards Bo who is in love with her. According to Hilary, if Bo is fired she will be unable to secure another position, another job: “she was milking the family buffalo when she was eight, and is the best mathematician in the house.” Hilary tells Leo that she is “retracting” the paper not adding a “correction” or “an addendum.” Furthermore she is resigning from the Institute to pursue a Philosophy degree. Leo tells Hilary that Jerry has read the paper and “said the paper was wrong” in part because “it pissed him off that his daughter’s group scored low on nice, and high on not so nice”(71-72). This results in the revelation that Jerry’s daughter Cathy is adopted

and that she is thirteen. This penultimate scene concludes with Hilary searching through the filled-in questionnaires for Cathy's questionnaire and once she has found it staring at it.

In the final scene Hilary is packing to leave as she hopes to go to New York University for three years, Jerry, talking in less than sentences to her and to someone on the cell-phone named Charlie. Both Hilary and Jerry are now aware that Hilary *is* Cathy's natural mother and Jerry half-heartedly tries to get Hilary to stay; he offers her money too. "Cathy barges in," now adolescent, putting on what is described in Stoppard's direction as a teenage "boredom performance" and says little to Hilary her natural Mother. Meanwhile on the cell phone Jerry is oblivious to Hilary's emotions, engaging in his trading, and wheeler dealing. Hilary gathers her things and "leaves" apparently "happy" (76-77).

It would be incorrect to say that nothing is resolved by the end of Stoppard's play. Hilary has discovered what has happened to her daughter she gave up for adoption. She tells Jerry that "the very last thing I imagined was that Catherine was a rich kid" (76). Hilary is leaving the employment she sought at the beginning of the play and Jerry continues to speculate. There is no resolution whatsoever to the "hard" problems presented in Stoppard's play: to speculation, to "consciousness"—whatever that may mean — to the "altruism" versus "egoism" debate, between what "nice" and being "not so nice" mean and the archetypal question of the nature of goodness. Such concerns are nothing new and will continue to remain subjects of debate. The strength of Stoppard's play in common with his other plays is that in various dramatic ways he continues to raise these irresolvable questions and issues.

Stoppard's *The Hard Problem* in some important ways is no different from his other dramatic work: his has been a continuous exploration of ethical issues and concerns. In his programme note to *The Hard Problem*, Stoppard writes: "ever since computers became part of our lives, the 'computational mind' has stirred strong passions from adherents, stronger ... than from adherents of the religious doctrines of the soul."

Now others may in their analysis of Stoppard's *The Hard Problem* focus more on the mind-brain dualism that they perceive to be at the core of the play, with the central question being can the human mind examine itself in such a way as to prove (or disprove) how it really works? Stoppard seems to be saying that knowledge of the machine will not (cannot) reveal everything about the human beings mind as Amal thinks, but (a weakness in the play), Stoppard palms off that issue to Hilary's subplot with her daughter, although they are meant to be connected. Others may see the reference to Godel's theory as far from pretentious and as an echo of a central

concern of the play: it is math-speak that says simply that rigorous formal systems, because they are human made and so actually inconsistent (as are human beings) at the core, cannot really prove their own consistency.¹⁰

It may be thought that drama is not the appropriate form to debate an ancient (and still unresolved) problem of the mind and body issue. In *The Hard Problem* Jerry is a capitalist who mouths the good fight but may be perceived as an amateur who dabbles in the ethical issue because he has the money, the dollars to do so. Jerry may be perceived as an illustration of a plot and thematic dead-end, as one more of those whom Hilary at first thinks has a solution, the answer. The underdeveloped mother-daughter issue feels, and seems to be to some members of the audience watching the play, to be the *emotional* heart of the play. However where the conclusion of Stoppard's *Arcadia* blends the intellectual — emotional beautifully, the ending of *The Hard Problem* feels unsatisfying — perhaps duplicating the unresolved mind-body issues that the play is also about.

To conclude, clearly Stoppard's work including his latest play *The Hard Problem* is fertile terrain, for critics engaged in ethical criticism: for critics who engage in two principal areas of thinking. In criticism regarded as an “interpretive paradigm that explores the nature of ethical issues from their considerable roles in the creation and interpretation of literary works.” And secondly “as a philosophical matrix that ‘refers to the inclusion of ethical components in the interpretation and evaluation of art’.”¹¹

Notes

1. Alastair Macaulay, “Tom Stoppard, A.E. Housman, and the Classics,” in “*The Real Thing*”: *Essays on Tom Stoppard in Celebration of his 75th Birthday* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013):150.

2. The unpaginated National Theatre programme/ booklet to *The Hard Problem a new play by Tom Stoppard*, in addition to advertisements, sponsors listings and performance illustrations, contains: “For Nicholas Hytner’s last months as Director of the National Theatre, one of his closest collaborators, Alan Bennett, gives a personal reminiscence” (6), “René Descartes” (25), Tom Stoppard “First Person” (26-30), accompanied by illustrations of “The Phrenological Organs” [p,26] and “Brain scan@Pete Saloutus/CORBIS” (31), a response to Stoppard from Armand Marie Leroi (30,32), “An exchange of letters with Richard Dawkins (2006)” and Stoppard (34-37), “Biographies” and photographers of the performers etc. (38-51).

3. My references are to Tom Stoppard, *The Hard Problem* (London: Faber and Faber, 2015), paperback edition.

4. See for instance Dominic Cavendish <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/11370017/The-Hard-Problem-Dorfman-review-a-major-disappointment.html>>; Michael Billington <<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/jan/28/the-hard-problem-review-tom-stoppard>>; and Peter Kemp, "Tom Stoppard's new play on the problems of consciousness : All in the mind." *TLS* February 6 (2015):17.
5. Personal conversation with William Baker, April 9, 2015.
6. *Camilla Turner* (Daily Telegraph February 7, 2015): <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-news/11398015/Tom-Stoppard-I-have-to-dumb-down-jokes-so-the-audience-can-understand.html>
7. The news item <<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jun/11/nobel-laureate-sir-tim-hunt-resigns-trouble-with-girls-comments>> came after Stoppard wrote *The Hard Problem*. Hunt was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine.
8. See "Letters to the Editor" *TLS* March 13:6; March 20, 2015: 6, March 27, 2015:6; and April 6, 2015. All questioned Strawson's article on the "Consciousness myth." *TLS* February 27 (2015): 14-15.
9. For examples of Stoppard's inventions in his work see Morgen Calderwood's on line article <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3122751/Sir-Tom-Stoppard-admits-inventing-quote-fake-professor-programme-one-famous-plays.html#ixzz3d4B5WeT2>>
10. See Douglas Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher ,Bach, An Eternal Golden Braid*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. I owe this reference and other helpful observations to my colleague and friend Professor John V. Knapp.
11. See Ken Womack and William Baker, "Reading Levinasian Notions of Alterity and the Ethics of Place in Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End* ," *Forum for World Literature Studies* 7:1 (2015): 88.

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责任编辑：杨革新