American Conservatory Theater

presents

Words on Plays

an educational guide to

INDIAN INK

by Tom Stoppard

Directed by Carey Perloff

February 18–March 21, 1999
Geary Theater

Words on Plays **prepared by**
Paul Walsh, *Dramaturg*
Elizabeth Brodersen, *Publications Editor*
Jessica Werner, *Publications Associate*
Alice Moore, *Publications Intern*

Sponsors

American Conservatory Theater
30 Grant Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94108
© 1999 American Conservatory Theatre Foundation, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Play

Cast and Synopsis of *Indian Ink* 5

The Playwright: Tom Stoppard

Indian Inspiration 11
by Elizabeth Brodersen

Stoppard on Stoppard 16

A Chronology of Works by Tom Stoppard 18

India, England, and the Raj

"An Imperishable Empire" 21
by Paul Walsh

A Brief Overview of Anglo-Indian History 24

English in India: Still All the Raj 27
by Pico Iyer

Hobson-Jobson 30

Emily Eden 31

British Women in India 34

Observations on Heat and Relationships 37

Heat 40
by H.D.

The *Rasa* Experience 41
by Jessica Werner

The Most Beautiful of the Herdswomen 44
by Alice Moore

A Guide to People, Places, and Events Mentioned in *Indian Ink* 47
Compiled by Paul Walsh

Fictional Flora and Literary Life in 1920s London 54

The Production

An Interview with Director Carey Perloff 56
by Elizabeth Brodersen

Study Questions 62

For Further Reading… 64

Synopsis of *Indian Ink*

The Cast
(in order of appearance)

Flora Crewe	Susan Gibney
Coomaraswami	Steven Anthony Jones
Nazrul/Questioner	Dileep Rao
Eleanor Swan	Jean Stapleton
Eldon Pike	Ken Grantham
Nirad Das	Art Malik
Anish Das	Firdous Bamji
David Durance	David Conrad
Dilip	Anil Kumar
Englishman	Brian Keith Russell
Englishwoman	Kathryn Crosby
Resident	Tom Blair
Club Servant	Amir Talai
Rajah/Politician	Shelly Desai
Rajah's Servant	Anil Kumar
Nell	Roxanne Raja
Eric	Christopher Rydman
Ensemble	Tom Blair, Kathryn Crosby, Roxanne Raja, Brian Keith Russell, Christopher Rydman, Adriana Sevan, Adam Suleman†, Amir Talai0

†Student in the A.C.T. Young Conservatory

Time and Place
The play is set in two periods:
1930 (in India) and mid 1980s (in England and in India).

ACT I

India 1930
Flora Crewe, a British poet, arrives in the native state of Jummapur on April 2 to give a lecture on literary life in London. The president of the local Theosophical Society, Coomaraswami, and several members of the society welcome her at the train station with great fanfare, garlanding her with marigolds. Coomaraswami escorts her to a guest bungalow and leaves her to rest, inviting her to picnic and visit temples the next day.

England, mid 1980s
Eldon Pike, a university professor from Texas, and Eleanor Swan, Flora's sister, sit together reading Flora's letters from her time in India. Pike, who teaches "Flora Crewe" and has edited a book of her poems, is now compiling a collection of her letters for publication. As they read Flora's letters over tea, we see the Flora of 1930 living the events as we hear her describe them in the letters. Pike is thrilled to have his hands on

Flora's original family letters and asks Eleanor to help him decipher the significance of each word in every letter so he can explain them at length in his footnotes to the published collection. Eleanor finds Pike slightly ridiculous and is not completely forthcoming.

India 1930 / England, mid 1980s
Flora describes her first picnic in India with the Theosophical Society and the lecture she gave to a packed audience. After the lecture she meets Nirad Das, whom she calls "my painter." He is quite an Anglophile and completely fascinated with London, especially with Bloomsbury and the Pre-Raphaelite painters. Nirad shyly gives Flora a sketch he made of her while she lectured. Pike asks Eleanor whether she has the sketch and is appalled to learn that she has not saved all of Flora's personal effects. Flora agrees to let Nirad visit her and paint her portrait.

India 1930 / England, mid 1980s
Nirad arrives at Flora's bungalow, and they quickly settle down to work—she sits writing a poem while he paints her portrait. A line in one of Flora's poems ("perhaps my soul will stay behind as a smudge of paint on paper") leads Pike to believe that the portrait by Nirad might have been a nude. Eleanor tells him that Flora was wearing a cornflower-blue dress and offers to show him the actual painting, which she describes as "fairly ghastly, like an Indian cinema poster." Pike is nevertheless thrilled to find tangible evidence of Flora's time in India.

India 1930
Flora sits writing a sensual poem while Nirad paints. Flora chides Nirad for being obsequious and asks him to "be *more* Indian, not Englished-up,"which he at first does not understand. "I want you to be with me as you would be if *I* were Indian,"she requests, which leads them, through a turn of phrases, to Flora amusedly accusing Das of making sexual advances, which embarrasses him profoundly.

England, mid 1980s
Mrs. Swan sits at tea with Anish Das, Nirad's son, who is also a painter. Anish is very excited to have seen his father's work—the portrait of Flora—reproduced on the cover of *The Collected Letters*, which has recently been published. He tells Eleanor that his father was imprisoned in Jummapur shortly after Flora's visit, because he took part in a protest against the Raj during Empire Day celebrations.

India 1930
Das arrives the next morning to continue with the portrait. He brings a present for Flora—a vintage copy of Emily Eden's 1866 collection of letters, *Up the Country*. At her request, he autographs the pencil drawing he made of her at their first meeting.

England, mid 1980s
Anish tells Eleanor that his father had been recently widowed when he met Flora in 1930. Anish remembers his father as quiet and gentlemanly, with a passion for English literature. He and Eleanor discuss India's imperial history, disagreeing on key historical events. Anish argues that India already possessed a highly developed culture when the British came; Eleanor argues that the British made India a "proper country."They change the subject to the safer topic of art. He asks permission to draw her, as he believes that will make them friends. She accedes.

India 1930
Flora and Nirad are playing Hobson-Jobson, an Indian-English word game in which each player tries to use as many hybrid words as possible in a sentence. They discuss language and the increasingly important role English has played in India, particularly in making possible the growing nationalist movement. Nirad reminds Flora that she hasn't yet looked at his portrait, but she tells him that when she was painted once before, the artist had taken offense at her desire to look at his work in progress. The artist was Modigliani, who painted her in the nude.

Captain David Durance, from the British residency, rides up on horseback to find out whether Flora has settled in comfortably. Nirad leaves. Durance quizzes Flora about her motives for coming to India. He invites her to dinner and dancing at the British club on Saturday night, and she accepts.

England, mid 1980s
Anish is still drawing Eleanor. She points out that, because Jummapur was a "native state," that is, a principality technically under the control of a rajah, and not directly under British control, the British could not have put his father in jail. Anish finishes the drawing, and she is pleased with it, yet she becomes upset thinking about how Flora was never recognized for her poetry during her lifetime but now, since her death, nosy scholars like Pike have been tracking Eleanor down, interested in every aspect of Flora's personal life. Anish asks to see the portrait of Flora his father painted.

India 1930
Flora and Nirad are together again in their working poses. The heat has put Flora in an ill temper and she makes no progress with her poem. She stops the work for tea. Nirad begins to put traditional elements of Indian miniature painting (a tree and a monkey) into his painting. The two discuss the Hindu gods and Flora's idea of true Indian art—images of women with "breasts like melons, and baby-bearing hips." Nirad teaches Flora about *rasa*, the central theory of Indian art appreciation, which emphasizes the state of heightened delight aroused in a viewer. Flora says that the *rasa* of the poem she is trying to write is "sex"; Nirad explains the elements of *shringara*, the *rasa* of erotic love: a lover and his beloved one, the moon, the scent of sandalwood, and being in an empty house.

India, mid 1980s
Flora's *Collected Letters* have been published and Pike has travelled to Jummapur to collect any information possible on Flora and the mysterious Indian artist who painted her portrait. With the help of a young assistant, Dilip, Pike learns that Flora's bungalow no longer exists, and the only thing that remains from her time is the tree, which is most likely the tree in the painting on the book cover. Pike suspects that another portrait exists, a "lost portrait" he believes to be a nude.

India 1930
Nirad is frustrated with his painting and tells Flora he feels no communion with her today; Flora blames herself, because she has been writing a letter to her sister instead of writing poetry, which has altered the energy between them. Flora admits that she peeked at the painting, and Nirad believes she hasn't said anything to him about it because she is not pleased with it. Flora accuses him of not being enough of a true artist to stand by his work regardless of its reception, and he is both furious and ashamed. He threatens to leave with

the canvas, and they struggle over it until Flora collapses, gasping for breath. Nirad helps her to a chair and she admits to him that she is in India because she is extremely ill, her "lungs are bad." In need of a cooling shower and rest, Flora heads toward the bathroom, undressing as she goes, only to find that the shower will not work. Desperate for relief, she returns to the bedroom, naked, and asks the embarrassed Das to pour water over her head. She then climbs into bed and asks Nirad if he would like to paint her nude. They both agree the painting will thus have more *rasa*.

England, mid 1980s
Eleanor shows Anish the oil portrait of Flora, and he is moved to tears. He points out that his father never finished the painting, as the tree and the monkey are only indicated, not completed. Anish says his father abandoned the oil painting to do a nude watercolor, which he then produces from his briefcase. Eleanor confirms that it is of Flora.

India 1930
Nirad brings Flora soda water as she lies naked in bed. He admits this is the first time he has ever been alone with an English woman, and Flora implores Nirad to stand up more for himself and for his work, and to be more of an "Indian artist," less of an Anglophile. He protests passionately that the British Empire has exploited India and all but destroyed Indian art. She asks him again to paint her nude and "Indian." Nirad finally relaxes and explains to her his Rajasthani tradition of narrative art, which often depicts the Hindu tale of Krishna and Radha's romance. A servant boy begins to operate the ceiling fan in Flora's room; she begins to fall asleep and Nirad leaves.

ACT II

India 1930 and mid 1980s
Flora is dancing at the club with Durance. She is disturbed to discover that the other couples already know that she is in India for her health. She and Durance step onto the verandah for a breath of fresh air.

Dilip brings Pike a dinner jacket on the verandah. He is very excited to discover the name of Flora's painter. Dilip tells him the club's cloakroom supervisor was the boy who fanned Flora, and Pike is eager to talk to him.

India 1930
Durance and Flora have drinks on the verandah. Durance confesses that he wishes Flora would stay in Jummapur longer and kisses her. Suddenly, the scene changes and they are out riding horses the next morning. Flora wants to know how the people at the club found out about her illness, and Durance implies that Nirad must have told them. Flora furiously denies this. Durance proposes marriage to her, and she rejects him.

India, mid 1980s
Dilip and Pike are in the courtyard of the Jummapur Palace Hotel, which used to be the rajah of Jummapur's palace. They are waiting to meet with the rajah's grandson, a politician. Pike is excited to have found out that Nirad served a jail sentence in 1930 for throwing a mango at the British resident's car during an Empire Day sports event. Pike and Dilip discuss the widespread influence of English language and English ideas even in modern-day India. Pike is now almost certain that Nirad painted Flora in the nude, and

that they must have had an intimate relationship, although Dilip refuses to believe that would have been possible in 1930s India.

India 1930

Flora enjoys lunch with the rajah of Jummapur, who shows her his impressive automobile collection. She is not pleased to learn that he also knows she is in India because of her health. The rajah offers to show Flora his art collection, and she asks to see all of it, even the erotic miniatures he woudn't normally show to a white woman. When she proves herself to be unlike other English women—by eating an apricot he offers her without first removing its skin—the rajah agrees to show her everything, on the condition that she must then accept a gift from him.

India, mid 1980s

Pike meets the rajah's grandson, who says his archivist has found a thank-you note written by Flora to the rajah acknowledging the gift of a painting—a miniature from his 1790 edition of the *Gita Govinda*. The rajah gives Pike a copy of the letter. Pike believes the painting to which it refers must have been a nude watercolor, the lost painting he has been looking for.

England, mid 1980s

Eleanor and Anish are in her garden having drinks and looking at the two paintings: Eleanor holds the nude watercolor by Nirad, and Anish holds the *Gita Govinda* watercolor from the rajah. They exchange paintings, each one being returned to its rightful owner. Eleanor says she didn't tell Pike about the gift from the rajah because "he's not family." Anish tells the story of finding the painting of Flora in the bottom of his father's trunk after his death. Anish reads great symbolism into his father's painting, claiming it must have been "painted with love."

India 1930

That evening, as it is getting dark, Flora returns home after her visit with the rajah to find Nirad and Coomaraswami waiting for her on the verandah. They tell her that the Theosophical Society has been suspended because of "disturbances" in town, and Coomaraswami wants to make sure that the rajah had not reproached Flora for her connection to the society. She assures him that he did not, and Coomaraswami goes, leaving Nirad and Flora alone in the house. Nirad tells Flora he cannot come the next day and would like to take his materials home with him. Flora says she must leave for the hills in the morning, but that she must know before she goes whether it was Das who told everyone that she is ill. He assures her that the information would have been disclosed in her letter of introduction sent from England, since any letter from England to Coomaraswami would have been opened by the British officials at the residency. Flora starts to cry, embarrassed that she could accuse Nirad of such betrayal. He offers her his handkerchief, which "smells faintly of…something nice."

Flora asks whether she may keep his unfinished painting. He begins to remove the canvas from the stretcher when the electricity goes out. Das tells Flora that he wants her to return to Jummapur after she visits the hill station, but she explains that she must get back to England because her sister (Eleanor) is pregnant. By the light of the bright moon, Das shows her a small watercolor he is working on, a nude miniature of her in the Rajasthani style. Flora loves the painting and says it has "the *rasa* of erotic love." They stand still and the moonlight clouds to darkness, as Flora is heard reading an erotic poem.

India, mid 1980s
It is dawn, and Pike and Dilip have been up all night drinking. Pike will not give up hope on finding the missing watercolor, and he hopes his most recent "discovery"—Anish Das—will be able to complete the puzzle.

India, 1930
Durance arrives at Flora's house to surprise her and take her to view the sunrise. He says he just passed Nirad walking on the road, who gave him a cold shoulder. Durance sees the erotic miniature given to her by the rajah and wants to know if she slept with him. She tells him to mind his own business. They drive off to see the sunrise.

India 1930 / England mid 1980s
Flora, with her suitcase packed to leave Jummapur, sits at her verandah table writing a letter to Eleanor. She subtly implies having made love with someone, and encloses her erotic poem "Pearl," which will later appear in a book of her poetry called *Indian Ink*. Pike, reading the letter, writes in the footnote that the "someone" was probably Durance.
England, mid 1980s
Eleanor and Anish discuss who the "someone" could have been. She gives him the Emily Eden book that his father gave Flora. Anish believes quite strongly that his father and Flora had an affair, but Eleanor declares that, knowing Flora, her affair could have been with any of the men she met in Jummapur. They agree not to tell Pike about the watercolor nude.

India 1931
Eleanor, as her younger self ("Nell"), visits Flora's grave in India. The headstone reads: "Born March 21, 1895. Died June 10, 1930." Nell explains to Eric Swan, an Englishman who has escorted her to the grave site (and will later become her husband), that she waited a year to visit because she had given birth to a baby who died. Eric invites Nell to a cricket match the next day and she accepts.

India 1930
Flora finishes her letter to Eleanor and leaves to meet her train, carrying the Emily Eden book. As the train departs, she begins to read from the book a passage describing the Queen's ball of 1839 and the Indians' deference to the British. The passage concludes, "I sometimes wonder they do not cut all our heads off and say nothing more about it."

Indian Inspiration

by Elizabeth Brodersen

> *I don't think of my life as a well into which I drop my bucket with a sense of going deeply into myself. [T]he area in which I feed off myself is really much more to do with thoughts I have had rather than days I have lived.*
>
> —Tom Stoppard

Time travel, epistolary mysteries, clueless academics, dialectical discussion, doomed romance, witty conversation, the interplay between heart and mind, desire and creativity: *Indian Ink* has all the elements of a truly Stoppardian creation. In a play described as his most mysterious to date, Stoppard's characters search for the key to the enigmatic alchemy that is the creative process: Anish seeks to understand his father's identity as a painter, Pike tries to decode the clues to Flora's life, loves, and poetry, while Flora and Nirad struggle to cross a divide of cultural misunderstanding to find each other and themselves. An equally intriguing artistic riddle, is the attempt to comprehend how one man can synthesize so many ideas on so many subjects into works of theatrical and emotional power.

Childhood Memories

Although not an autobiographical work, *Indian Ink* does draw on Stoppard's vivid memories of the four years he spent in India as a young boy. "My first memories are of India. I loved India when I was there," he says, "and I loved it still when I returned."

Born in Zlín, Czechoslovakia, in 1937, young Thomas Straussler and his family fled to Singapore in 1938, where they lived until 1942. Mrs. Straussler, Thomas, and his older brother were then evacuated to India, leaving Dr. Straussler behind. In 1946, after receiving news of her husband's death at the hands of the Japanese, Mrs. Straussler married the thoroughly British Major Kenneth Stoppard, who brought the family back to England, instantly turning her young sons into equally British schoolboys. "People tend to assume my first language was Czech," says Stoppard, "but it's not true. By the time I was old enough to go to school, I was in India, going to English-speaking schools. I don't recall speaking any language but English."

During the family's years in India, the Stoppards moved around frequently, living in the settlements of the northern region where *Indian Ink*'s native state of Jummapur (which means "smallville" in Hindi) would lie if it existed: Nainital, Darjeeling, Lahore, Cawnpore, Calcutta, Delhi. Caught between cultures, the Stoppards were obviously not members of the native population, nor were they really, as he has said, "Raj people": "We were white, but we were also refugees in a sense," Stoppard remembers. "My memories are of a rather free childhood. I wasn't very supervised."The Stoppard boys spent most of their time at Mt. Hermon School, a multiracial school run by American Methodists in Darjeeling, rather than one of the famous Anglo-Indian schools established for sons of the British Raj.

Radio Days

Stoppard's family eventually settled in Bristol, where, after leaving school at 17, Tom worked for several years as a journalist and theater critic before turning his hand to writing drama. Several of his early plays were written for British radio, a venue where struggling playwrights were somewhat more likely to find an income and an audience. (BBC Radio Drama, which at the time called itself the "National Theatre of the Air," presented the work of such writers as Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, John Mortimer, and Joe Orton at critical stages of their development.) Stoppard's first radio plays included *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (1964), *"M" Is for Moon Among Other Things* (1964), *If You're Glad I'll Be Frank* (1966), and *Albert's Bridge* (1967), which won the 1968 Italia Prize and helped to establish him as a professional playwright.

Despite the spectacular success of his writing for the stage, including *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), which earned Stoppard the 1967 Tony Award for best play and instant international prominence, *Jumpers* (1972), *Travesties* (1974), and *The Real Thing* (1982), and the financial rewards of screenwriting (his credits include scripts for *Brazil*, *Empire of the Sun*, *Billy Bathgate*, *The Russia House*, and the recent hit *Shakespeare in Love*), Stoppard has continued to write occasionally for radio.

In 1989, then head of drama for the BBC John Tydeman commissioned Stoppard to write a new play for Radio 3. Occupied with other projects, including adapting and directing the film version of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Stoppard finally began work on the radio script in September 1991 and delivered the finished play in October, a year late.

Stoppard says he started with a "tiny notion" of writing about the conversation between a poet and a painter, intrigued by the circular nature of the situation: while the painter was painting her portrait, she would be writing a poem about the experience of having her portrait painted. He was also interested in writing "something about the ethics of empire," but Flora and her poetry soon took over. "It began as odd pages, dialogue and stuff," he has said. "I kept trying to find what play they belonged to. . . . Then I found the idea of her poetry so perversely enjoyable I went on writing her poetry far longer than you'd believe." The result was *In the Native State*, broadcast in 1991, later expanded to become *Indian Ink*.

Written for the actress Felicity Kendal, who played Flora on the air and in the original stage production, *Indian Ink* is dedicated to Felicity's mother, Laura Kendal, who was part of a traveling Shakespearean company of actors that toured India. How and when the play actually ended up in India is still something of a mystery, however. "I had only been thinking about [India] in the general sense of using what I've got," Stoppard has said. "I've got India. It feels that one should be using it sometime sooner or later."

The Mysteries of Creation

In *Shakespeare in Love*, the recent film cowritten by Stoppard about Shakespeare's search for the romantic muse that would inspire *Romeo and Juliet*, Stoppard examines the mystifying process of making theater. Stoppard's Shakespeare exploits the events of everyday life, finding inspiration in everything from offhand suggestions from a rival playwright and conversations overhead in the street to love scenes with a beautiful noblewoman.

Stoppard himself seems equally unsure of the source of his creative impulse. He reads voraciously, mostly nonfiction books and journalism, always on the lookout for the idea that will become his next play. His library holds thousands of volumes, and he travels with a custom-made portable bookshelf. For *Indian Ink* alone, he says he "must have read

a million words on the British rule of India" in some 50 to 60 books, mostly nonfiction. Particularly obsessed with newspapers, he reads three a day, five or six on Sundays, and subscribes to the *Spectator*, *New York Review of Books*, *London Review of Books*, and the *New Statesman*, among others. "I'm addicted to newsprint and the weekly periodicals," he says. "They stack up behind me, and I seem to be pathologically incapable of throwing them away. Eighty percent of my reading goes on newsprint. If I didn't read any of that stuff, I'd probably read three times as many books as I do."

Stoppard claims that all of this reading is done for pleasure, not "in the spirit of dogged research." The ideas he gleans accumulate slowly in his subconscious mind (he keeps no journal, although he wishes he did); when the concepts colliding in his brain reach critical mass, they emerge spontaneously, almost miraculously as a play. "I can never remember why I write anything," he says. "I tend to get going on a play when several strands begin to knit together….It's when things turn out to be possibly the same play that I find I can get going."

Stoppard denies the existence of a single, identifiable inspiration for a particular work. "I talk about, or [am encouraged] to talk about, a book or a thought which generates everything that follows," Stoppard has said. "It's true in a limited sense, but an alternative way of making a picture of the process would be to say that it's something that starts you up, like a motor gets started up, like a cranking handle. Then you throw the handle away, and drive off down the road somewhere and see where the road goes.

"One of the reasons that I tend to deliver plays late, which I do," he has said, "is that I can't shake off this idea each time that I can't possibly write anything until I've worked out exactly what's going to happen and why. I tend to start writing a play at the point where I just give up in despair and just *start* and hope that something works itself out. Clearly that's the way plays *ought* to be written because it allows them to be organic, and I think that if you work to plan too much from a set of principles as it were, just have a matrix and then knock the thing off in three weeks, I think probably you'd end up with something too schematic."

When a play is finished, the inspirational reservoir is empty, and Stoppard begins the quest anew for the next idea and the next play. "I use everything I've got hanging around so that whenever I finish a play I have absolutely nothing left at all," he says. "I just use it up and move on."

An Academic Aside

Over the years, Stoppard's appetite for arcane information has covered a vast array of scientific, historical, literary, and philosophical fields, a catalogue of which would in itself make an impressive university syllabus. Just a few of the topics he has incorporated into his work over the last decade or so would include wave-particle physics and espionage (*Hapgood*); chaos theory, Byronic poetry, and landscape architecture (*Arcadia*, 1993); and A. E. Housman and ancient Roman poetry (*The Invention of Love*, 1997, his most recent play).

For someone who derives so much joy from learning, Stoppard takes (and gives) suprising pleasure in ridiculing professional academics. The pretentious figures who stereotypically such academic institutions as Cambridge and Oxford appear often in his plays, from the gymnastic philosophers of *Jumpers* to *Arcadia*'s blustering Bernard Nightingale and *Indian Ink*'s Eldon Pike. "I haven't got anything *against* them," he says. "But I do think it's time somebody called me on this note of tolerant amusement, which I'm sure is quite unfair.

"What we're really talking about here is a kind of shy compliment. It's a backhanded way of revealing a sort of fascination for academics. I never went to university, and I think probably that was very bad for me. I think it's left me with an attitude toward university people."

In *Indian Ink*, Stoppard directs his anti-academic attitude for the first time against an American (although there was "a kind of proto-Pike" in his 1977 play *Professional Foul*). His decision to make Pike an American "is the result of a discreditable subconscious working out a play," he says, "although there is some deep background. America is a place where everything good and everything bad comes from, in a way. We get many good things from there. I think we also get a sort of overanalytical response to literature—but maybe that's completely untrue. It may be there's just too many people doing it, and there's only a few things that can be said about a work of art.

"I think it's time I grew up about America. It's always been, since my childhood, the great, glamorous country, but it is also a naive country, and it's this combination of glamour and naiveté which makes it attractive, but also makes it a culture which one tends to make fun of, to a degree."

Discovering *Rasa*

One of the great mysteries of the creation of *Indian Ink* is Stoppard's fortuitous discovery of *rasa*, a fundamental precept of Indian art theory that stresses the emotional response of the viewer to a work of art, and a principal theme of the play. Browsing in a shop in London's Charing Cross Road, Stoppard came across a volume that described the various kinds of *rasa*, with their corresponding colors and deities. "It's quite alarming how casually one trawls the ocean for things that end up important in one's work," he has said. "I wasn't engaged in a systematic search, [*rasa*] wasn't something I would have inevitably come across. It was simply a case of being early for an appointment and going into a bookshop to kill some time. That's a bit alarming. I had already started work on the play."

Stoppard says he had never even heard of *rasa* before writing *Indian Ink*. "This is my new system," he says. "I just blindly stumble forward, relying on destiny to bring me what I need. I'm completely shameless that way. I just grab what I need while I'm working on it."

Once accused of writing coldly intellectual, if brilliantly hilarious, "argument plays" with interchangeable characters [as he said in a 1972 interview: "I write plays because writing dialogue is the only respectable way of contradicting yourself"), Stoppard has of late been writing plays of increasing emotional complexity and warmth. He seems to have mastered the ability to portray what *Indian Ink* director Carey Perloff (who also staged the West Coast premiere of *Arcadia* at A.C.T. in 1995) calls "the eroticism of a really good idea."

Although he denies having become "*rasa*-conscious" since writing *Indian Ink*, the emotional side of the theatrical equation does seem to be more heavily weighted in his recent work—particularly in *Arcadia*, *Indian Ink*, *The Invention of Love*, and *Shakespeare in Love*, all of which have profoundly moving love stories at their core. Is this development an intentional response to his early critics? "'Intent' isn't quite the word," he says. "I think I wasn't aware of it. I think that what's happened to me is that as I got older I cared less about, oh, hiding behind the play, really. I cared less about self-exposure. Maybe I warmed up so I wrote warmer plays."

Stoppard has admitted, however, to surprise at *Indian Ink*'s "benevolence." "It's much more an intimate play than a polemical play," he has said. "There are no villains in it. It's a very cozy play in many ways. . . . But I really enjoy its lack of radical

fierceness. It has its checks and balances. There's no ranting or storming around; there are no long monologues."

Back to the Future

Stoppard says that scenes of India continued to appear in his dreams until a return visit to India in 1991, after he finished *In the Native State*, put his childhood visions to rest. He found Darjeeling "remarkably unchanged," but adorned with the trappings of contemporary life; the horses of his romantic past have become the Land Rovers of the modern present.

Now that he has "used up" his Indian inspiration, Stoppard has moved on to the quest for his next play, but is skittish about discussing the details of his work in progress. "I tend to get overenthusiastic or overoptimistic and start blabbing about what I think I'm going to write next, and then it turns out I lose traction on it and do something else," he says. "I'm just vaguely reading in a Russian area, but I don't know whether I'm doing it to any purpose at the moment. I'll keep going as long as I find it interesting." As will we.

Material for this article was drawn from an interview with Tom Stoppard conducted on December 28, 1998, and excerpts from other interviews, particularly New York Times *theater writer Mel Gussow's* Conversations with Stoppard*, published by Grove Press.*

Stoppard on Stoppard

[When asked, "Did you get into the theater by accident?":] Of course. One day, I tripped and fell against a typewriter, and the result was *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*.

—The New Yorker

I liked [*Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon*, Stoppard's novel, which sold 467 copies when it was published in 1966] enormously when I wrote it—I worked on it for months, all day and half the night . . . . and I thought it would be a great success and that *Rosencrantz*, which I'd just finished, would simply be an interesting episode….Things you write tend to go off, like fruit. There are very few things I've written that haven't tended to decompose, later on, before my startled gaze—that is perfectly natural, since literary material isn't mineral but organic, and nature changes—but *Malquist* wears well, at least for me.

—The New Yorker

I can't invent plots. I've formed the habit of hanging my plays on other people's plots. It's a habit I'm trying to kick.

—The New Yorker

MG: Does that mean you would not write an inarticulate character?…If you had a dustman in a play, he would have to be…

TS: …an exceptional dustman. He wouldn't be there to take up the garbage.

MG: Why do you think that's so? Would the unexceptional dustman…bore you?

TS: …He wouldn't get a chance to bore because I wouldn't be inspired to write about anything that needed to be boring.

—from a 1983 interview by Mel Gussow in the New York Times

What I like to do is take a stereotype and betray it, rather than create an original character. I never try to invent characters. All my best characters are clichés.

—The New Yorker

[*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*] was not written as a response to anything about alienation in our times….It would be fatal to set out to write primarily on an intellectual level. Instead, one writes about human beings under stress—whether it is about losing one's trousers or being nailed to the cross.

—Life

It is a mistake to assume that plays are the end-products of ideas (which would be limiting): the ideas are the end-products of the plays.

—The New Yorker

I remember having a play in New York as something which is very, very, very stressful. Something that all converges on a point of acute pain, which may resolve itself into extreme ecstasy or deep depression. I mean, that's not a healthy way to live.

—New York

Writing a play is like smashing [an] ashtray, filming it in slow motion, and then running the film in reverse, so that the fragments of rubble appear to fly together. You start—or at least *I* start—with the rubble.

Whenever I talk to intelligent students about my work, I feel nervous, as if I were going through customs. "Anything to declare, sir?" "Not really, just two chaps sitting in a castle at Elsinore, playing games. That's all." "Then let's have a look in your suitcase, if you don't mind, sir." And, sure enough, under the first layer of shirts there's a pound of hash and fifty watches and all kinds of exotic contraband. "How do you explain this, sir?" "I'm sorry, Officer, I admit it's there, but I honestly can't remember packing it."

—*The New Yorker*

I might subscribe to certain beliefs on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and to a totally different set on Tuesday and Thursday. I think that a sense of conflict between one's emotional response to absolute morality and one's rational sense of the implausibility of there being a God is obviously a part of what I call "the Ping Pong game." I always write about two people arguing. I play Ping Pong with myself, but there is no killing shot. It is like Ping Pong against a clock; there is a tendency for the argument to be won by the person who finishes speaking when the bell goes, rather than because there is nothing left to say.

—*Time*

When I started off—I'm thinking of *Jumpers* and particularly of *Travesties*—I wasn't interested in a narrative line. I had things the other way round. *Travesties* is a play about display, really. It's pastiche, and it's jokes, and arguments. I was interested in showing off. I was having a good time, and I had certain arguments that I enjoyed conducting with the other half of myself about the role of the artist. *Arcadia* is almost the antithesis of that play. It has worked in London and in different countries. And I'm sure it's because the narrative carries everything else.

—*New York*

You have to bow down before the true god of theater, who is merciless and is saying, This is not a text, this is an event happening in this room at this time in front of people who are under no obligation to remain.

—*Harper's Bazaar*

There is a God, and he looks after English playwrights.

—*The New Yorker*

A Chronology of Works by Tom Stoppard

1963 *A Walk on the Water* (televised; revised as *The Preservation of George Riley*, televised 1964; revised as *Enter a Free Man*, produced in London, 1968)

1964 *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (broadcast, 1964; included in *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays*, 1983)
"M" Is for Moon among Other Things (broadcast, 1964; produced Richmond, Surrey 1977; included in *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays*, 1983)
Introduction 2 (short stories, with others; London, Faber & Faber, 1964)

1965 *The Gamblers* (produced Bristol, 1965)

1966 *If You're Glad I'll Be Frank* (broadcast, 1966; produced Edinburgh, 1969; London, 1976)
Tango, adaptation of a play by Slawomir Mrozek, translated by Nicholas Bethell (produced London, 1966)
A Separate Peace (televised, 1966)
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (produced Edinburgh, 1966; revised version produced London and New York)
Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon (novel; London, Blond, 1966; New York, Knopf, 1968)

1967 *Albert's Bridge* (broadcast, 1967; produced Edinburgh, 1969)
Teeth (televised, 1967; included in *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays*, 1983)
Another Moon Called Earth (televised, 1967; included in *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays*, 1983)

1968 *Neutral Ground* (televised 1968; included in *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays*, 1983)
Neutral Ground (televised 1968; included in *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays*, 1983)
The Real Inspector Hound (produced London, 1968; New York, 1972)

1970 *After Magritte* (produced London, 1970; New York, 1972)
Where Are They Now? (broadcast, 1970)

1971 *Dogg's Our Pet* (produced London, 1971; published in *Ten of the Best*, edited by Ed Berman, London, Inter-Action Imprint, 1979)

1972 *Jumpers* (produced London, 1972; Washington, D.C. and New York, 1974)
Artist Descending a Staircase (broadcast, 1972)
One Pair of Eyes (documentary)

1973 *The House of Bernarda Alba*, adaptation of the play by Gar_ia Lorca (produced London, 1973)

1974 *Travesties* (produced London, 1974; New York, 1975)

1975 *The Romantic Englishwoman* (screenplay, with Thomas Wiseman)
The Boundary (television play; from the "Eleventh Hour" series, with Clive Exton)
Three Men in a Boat (television play; from the novel by Jerome K. Jerome)

1976 *Dirty Linen* and *New-found-land* (produced London, 1976; Washington, D.C., and New York, 1977)
The Fifteen-Minute Hamlet (as *The [Fifteen Minute] Dogg's Troupe Hamlet*, produced London, 1976)

1977 *Albert's Bridge and Other Plays* (includes *Artist Descending a Staircase*, *If You're Glad I'll Be Frank*, *A Separate Peace*, *Where Are They Now?*, New York, Grove Press, 1977)
Every Good Boy Deserves Favour: A Play for Actors and Orchestra, music by André Previn (produced London, 1977; Washington, D.C., 1978; New York, 1979)
Professional Foul (televised, 1977)

1978 *Night and Day* (produced London, 1978; Washington, D.C., and New York, 1979)
Albert's Bridge Extended (produced Edinburgh, 1978)
Despair (screenplay)

1979 *Undiscovered Country*, adaptation of a play by Schnitzler (produced London, 1979; Hartford, Connecticut, 1981)
Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth (produced Warwick, London, Washington, D.C., and New York, 1979)

1980 *The Human Factor* (screenplay)

1981 *On the Razzle*, adaptation of a play by Johann Nestroy (produced Edinburgh and London, 1981; Washington, D.C., 1982)

1982 *The Real Thing* (produced London, 1982; revised version produced New York, 1984)
The Dog It Was That Died (broadcast 1982; included in *The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays*, 1983)

1983 *The Love for Three Oranges*, adaptation of the opera by Prokofiev (produced on tour, 1983)
The Dog It Was That Died and Other Plays (includes *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*, *"M" Is for Moon among Other Things*, *Teeth*, *Another Moon Called Earth*, *Neutral Ground*, *A Separate Peace*; London, Faber & Faber, 1983)

1984 *Rough Crossing*, adaptation of a play by Ferenc Molnár (produced London, 1984)
Squaring the Circle: Poland 1980-81 (televised, 1984)

1985 *Brazil* (screenplay, with Terry Gilliam and Charles McKeown)

1986 *Dalliance*, adaptation of a play by Schnitzler (produced London, 1986)

1986 *Largo Desolato*, adaptation of a play by Václav Havel (produced Bristol, 1986)

1987 *Empire of the Sun* (screenplay)

1988 *Hapgood* (produced London, 1988; produced New York, 1994)

1990 *The Russia House* (screenplay)

1991 *Billy Bathgate* (screenplay)
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (screenplay)
In the Native State (broadcast, 1991)

1993 *Arcadia* (produced London, 1993; produced New York, 1995; produced San Francisco, 1995)

1994 *Indian Ink* (produced London, 1995)

1998 *The Invention of Love* (produced London, 1998)
Shakespeare in Love (screenplay)

"An Imperishable Empire"

by Paul Walsh

> *To fight for the right, to abhor the imperfect, the unjust or the mean, to swerve neither to the right hand nor to the left, to care nothing for flattery or applause or odium or abuse . . . but to remember that the Almighty has placed your hand on the greatest of ploughs . . . to drive the blade a little forward in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice or happiness or prosperity, a sense of manliness or moral dignity, a spring of patriotism, a dawn of intellectual enlightenment, or a stirring of duty, where it did not exist before. That is enough. That is the Englishman's justification in India.*
>
> —Lord Curzon, British Viceroy in India (1899–1905)
> Speech at the Bombay Byculla Club, November 16, 1905

India was not the first colony in the British empire, nor was it the last to win independence; but it was in India, more than any other place, that British colonialism defined itself. And just as modern India was to some extent defined by British colonial presence from the first trading forts set up by the East India Company in the early 17th century through independence in 1947, so modern Britain is a product of its own colonial rule in that vast and diverse subcontinent south of the Himalayas. The moral fervor and cultural jingoism, as well as the practical justifications and ethical compromises, that guided the British Raj (rule) in India during the 18th and 19th centuries became central to Britain's own changing understanding of itself in the early decades of this century.

For the British, India was not just another colony during the Raj, nor was it simply a part of that empire upon which the sun never set. It was also always something more: a mental construct, a poetic trope, a fictional mirror that reflected British notions of moral sovereignty and cultural supremacy, as well as the right and rightness of British rule around the world. As such, that vast and exotic terrain called India—decidedly British and enticingly other—has continued to hold a special place in the minds and hearts of the British as the jewel in the crown of an empire, now lost, that once spanned the globe and defined both British greatness and British goodness. "As long as we rule India we are the greatest power in the world," Lord Curzon proclaimed in 1901. "If we lose it we shall drop straightaway to a third-rate power."

More British Than Britain

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, India served as a kind of social laboratory for the principles of classical British liberalism. Just as India was the training ground for the British army, so it was the testing ground, through the prestigious Indian Civil Service, for a competitive government bureaucracy in which personal merit, rather than family prestige or political patronage, was valued and rewarded. Nineteenth-century laissez-faire economic arguments were used to pry Indian markets away from the monopolies of the East India Company and open them to cotton cloth manufactured in British mills, which sold for half or a quarter of the price of hand-woven Indian cloth. While British fortunes were made, millions of Indian spinners and weavers were forced back to the land as subsistence farmers. As the British colonial economy flourished, so British society was rejuvenated as the younger sons of Britain's finer families, who had no better prospects of

employment at home, went out to India to uphold the tradition of British colonial guardianship among "the natives."

New strictures of protocol and formality based on social position, education, regiment, class, and conduct ruled the lives of British colonialists in India, imparting to the Raj a sense of mannered formality, elegance, taste, and civility that boasted a way of life known the world over as resoundingly British. The colonies were at times more British in their sensibilities and manners than Britain itself, creating for the metropol a mirror society upon which to judge and moderate its own rates of change. From the stories of Rudyard Kipling to such novels as E. M. Forster's *Passage to India* and Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet*, the fictionalized lives of British colonialists in India—administrators and judges with the Indian Civil Service, officers in the British Indian Army, traders, planters, and businessmen in the profitable cotton and jute trades, as well as their wives, daughters, and visitors from home—became an intrinsic part of British attitudes toward themselves and toward the world, exerting a more profound influence on British sentiments than any other of her colonies has ever done. British colonial rule in India thus helped to remake Britain even as the British colonialists sought to remake India.

Civilized and Civilizing Rule

If the Indians were generally disregarded and exploited in the process, the colonialists argued, this was a small price to pay for the civilized and civilizing rule they enjoyed under the British Raj—a rule based on such western principles as universal law, private property, individual liberty, and modern education. Along with the introduction to India of these western notions came challenges to the ancient aristocracies, traditional religious beliefs, and centuries-old histories of local glories, dreams, and animosities that had kept the subcontinent divided. Along with the notion of private ownership of land came such other modern institutions as rents, taxes, collateral loans, credit, and bankruptcy. Old elites were replaced by absentee moneylenders in the new financial centers of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, and a new generation of British-educated Indian bankers and bureaucrats became the leaders of the social and political revolutions of the 19th and early 20th centuries. And along with the introduction of western education came a dismissal of and dissociation from traditional learning and indigenous literatures that had linked Indians to the greatness of their own past. English came to serve as a unifying national language, bridging the linguistic barriers that had helped to keep the diverse peoples of the Indian subcontinent apart.

The modernizing infrastructural changes that British rule brought to India in the 19th century, including the British-built railway system and the Post & Telegraph Service (both constructed, at great cost to India, to facilitate colonial rule), also contributed to nascent Indian national consciousness. Improved communication helped people from Bengal to Bombay and from Madras to the Punjab to realize their shared experience of colonial suppression and their common desire for personal liberty and national freedom. In this sense, as in so many others, the movement for Indian national independence that gave birth to the Indian National Congress in 1885 and Mahatma Gandhi's program of civil disobedience in pursuit of *purna swaraj* (complete independence) throughout the early decades of the 20th century was more a fulfillment of the British Raj than it was a betrayal.

Intricate Interchange

As early as 1833, British liberal historian and statesman Thomas Babington Macaulay had advocated introducing English education in India, predicting that by doing so the

administrators of the East India Company would not only prepare a class of educated Indians to serve the needs of British administration but would also secure India's future cultural and economic dependence on Britain. As Macaulay argued before the House of Commons in 1833:

> *It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government, we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that, having been instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. …Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history.*

It is easy today to condemn the cultural arrogance of Macaulay's proposal to educate a class of Indians who were "English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" and to open the way to a free and independent India that was also "an imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws." But simply to condemn is also to ignore the intricacy of the interchange between western modernization and the growing tide of Indian nationalism that would lead from the unification of India under British rule in the 19th century to the struggle for Indian independence in the 20th. English, the language of the colonizing power, served also as the language of national unification, as those who had been educated in English schools—including such nationalist leaders as Mahatma Gandhi himself—turned the lessons of western literature and culture, of the Enlightenment and the age of revolutions, against their own suppressors.

Politics, it has been said, is always a question of who is doing what to whom. Flora Crewe echoes these sentiments in Stoppard's *Indian Ink* when she reminds Nirad Das: "Who whom. Nothing else matters." Stoppard has said that when he first sat down to write the radio play *In the Native State*, later adapted for the stage as *Indian Ink*, he intended to write a play about a poet posing for a painter while writing a poem about being painted. This complex communion between artist and model betrays the politics of who/whom to which Flora refers, becoming instead a richly complex metaphor for the equally complicated ethics of colonial interchange at the heart of both Stoppard's play and of the fictional mirror and historical fact called the British Raj.

A Brief Overview of Anglo-Indian History

1400s Portugal and Spain begin trade with India for spices; the Mughal empire's wealth attracts British, Dutch, and French competition.

1600s In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I grants a monopoly over eastern trade to a group of 25 London "adventurers." The British East India Company establishes trading stations at strategic ports on India's coast—Surat (1613), Bombay (1661), and Calcutta (1691)—and trains Indians as a police force to guard the forts. The British forces' command of the seas drives away Portuguese and Dutch traders.

1700s The Mughal empire slowly disintegrates.

1746 The French join the competitive Indian spice trade. For the next 17 years India is a battleground for the British and the French, each power attaching to itself as many native rulers as possible.

1757 Englishman Robert Clive's victory over the Bengalis at Plassey traditionally marks the beginning of the British empire in India (recognized in the Treaty of Paris in 1763).

1770s Warren Hastings, Clive's successor, is the East India Company's first governor-general to be appointed by Parliament. He rules like a *nawab* (Indian ruler) between 1773 and 1784, and Parliament sends Lord Cornwallis to try Hastings for high crimes. Cornwallis signs 48 regulations that become the backbone of the British Indian empire, including establishing a system of civil servants, landlords, and tenants. Three-fifths of India is under direct British rule; the other 562 small principalities are called "native states" and are governed by local princes, rajahs, and maharajahs, under significant British influence.

1800s English missionaries establish schools and hospitals. Britain begins exporting goods to India, and Indian industry suffers. The British unify the Indian postal and telegraph services, establish a railroad, teach English, and train one-third of a million Indians to fight to protect the empire.

1857 Social unrest leads to the bloody Mutiny/Rising of 1857, an insurrection in northern India referred to by the British as the *Sepoy* ("Indian troops") Mutiny and by many Indians as their first war for independence. The insurrection is triggered when the British introduce new rifle cartridges rumored to be greased with oil made from animal fat (the fat of sacred cows is taboo to Indian Hindus, as pig fat is to Indian Muslims); the British respond with barbaric violence and eventually suppress the revolt in 1858.

1858 Determined to prevent a recurring uprising, Britain initiates widespread reform: Queen Victoria proclaims that control of the administration of India will pass from the East India Company to the crown. The governor-general of India is now called the viceroy.

1875 The Theosophical Society is founded in England by Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

1877 Britain's power is reinforced when Queen Victoria is crowned empress of India.

1879 The Theosophical Society decides to work in India and gains the support of many Indians.

1885 The Indian National Congress is founded and spearheads the struggle for freedom from British rule.

1905 The province of Bengal is partitioned, regarded by many Indians as an attempt to marginalize the politically assertive Bengalis. Widespread agitation follows, with boycotts and burning of foreign goods.

1906 The Muslim League is established in Dacca with encouragement from the British.

1914 World War I begins.

1915 Mohandas K. Gandhi returns to India from South Africa, where he had led a successful peaceful-resistance movement against the British government.

1918 The Armistice ending World War I is signed on November 11. India is plagued by crop failures and an influenza epidemic that kills millions.

1919 The Rowlatt Acts extend wartime suspension of civil liberties and common law safeguards. Gandhi, calling them the "Black Acts," calls for a *satyagraha* (nonviolent protest), which quickly turns violent.

In response to violent protest in the Punjab in April, General Reginald Dyer orders troops to fire on a Hindu gathering, killing 400 and wounding more than 1200 Indian nationalists. The Amritsar Massacre ignites nationalism. Poet Rabindranath Tagore renounces his British knighthood.

The Government of India Act introduces the system of "diarchy" in the provinces, granting elected Indian ministers shared power with British governors. The concessions do not satisfy Indian nationalists.

1920 Gandhi launches a Non-Cooperation Movement (a boycott of British goods and services), which he withdraws after a violent incident in Uttar Pradesh.
The Communist Party of India is founded at Tashkent in Russia.

1930 [Flora Crewe arrives in Jummapur. She dies the following spring and is buried in Jummapur.]

Gandhi starts the Civil Disobedience Movement by initiating a protest against the Salt Tax. His Salt March to the sea becomes a populist movement, with women and children playing important roles; he reaches the coast at Dandi with thousands of followers.

On April 6, Gandhi gathers sea salt along the beach in defiance of the Salt Act. Riots break out all over India as salt factories are set up in acts of civil disobedience. On May 4, Gandhi is arrested and imprisoned for defiance of the Salt Act.

Lord Irwin, the viceroy, suggests a Round Table Conference and proposes eventual dominion status, or autonomy, for India, within the imperial government. The first Round Table Conference is held in London in November.

1931 A pact between Gandhi and Irwin is announced, followed by Gandhi's release from prison to attend Round Table talks on Indian independence.

1932 The government launches an offensive against the Indian National Congress by arresting Gandhi; savage repression is unleashed on the country.

1934 The Communist Party of India is declared illegal; Gandhi withdraws the civil disobedience campaign and resigns from the congress, "only to serve it better in thought, word, and deed."

1935 A Government of India Act is passed in August, providing for a federal government in India with provincial autonomy, and expands the franchise to cover one-sixth of the population. Real power, however, remains with the viceroy and his governors and officials.

1937 The first elections for the new provincial legislatures are held, and many Indians take office in the new ministries.

1939 World War II breaks out. The viceroy announces India's participation without consulting nationalist leaders.

1942 The Indian National Congress launches the Quit India movement; leaders of the congress are imprisoned and a country-wide uprising is repressed.

To procure India's support of Britain's war effort, the British cabinet proposes establishing an interim government, in which Britain would maintain control over defense and foreign policy, to be followed by full self-government after the war.

1946 Thr British Labour administration offers India self-government. Disagreement between the congress and the Muslim demand for Pakistan stalls progress. A year of Hindu-Muslim violence begins, until the congress accepts the partition of the country.

1947 India becomes independent at midnight on August 15, with Jawaharlal Nehru as the first prime minister. The country is partitioned into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India. Mass migration and massacre occur as six million Hindus and Sikhs migrate to India from West Pakistan and as many Muslims migrate from India.

1948 Gandhi is assassinated by a Hindu fanatic, part of the Hindu faction that accuses Gandhi of being a "Muslim-lover."

English in India: Still All the Raj

by Pico Iyer

India is the most talkative country in the world, it often seems, and it comes at you in almost 200 languages, 1,652 dialects, and a million signs and slogans screaming out of every store and taxicab. Many of them are just familiar enough to be quite strange. We passed Textoriums as we drove into town, and a Toilet Complex, Stomach Trimmer palaces, and Police Beat Boxes. We passed the Clip Joint Beauty Clinic and Nota Bene Cleaners of Distinction. A sign outside one apartment block offered: "No Parking for Out Siders. If Found Guilty, All Tyres Will Be Deflated With Extreme Prejudice." An ad for a lecture informed me that "Yogic laughter is multidimensional." I could only imagine that, like most of the city's notices, it had been fashioned by some proud graduate of the course I saw advertised in the local newspaper: "We make you big boss in English conversation. Hypnotize people by your highly impressive talks. Exclusive courses for exporters, business tycoons."

Malcolm Muggeridge famously remarked that the last true Englishman would be an Indian, and it's easy to believe that when you hear the "jolly goods" and "out of station chappies" ricocheting around the Willingdon Club in Bombay, or any of the other old canteens and cantonments and Civil List houses that fill the country's dusty enclaves. Much of the fascination of Indian English lies in the fact that it is as flavorful a monument to the Raj as the white-flannel cricketers along the Oval, the "Whispering Pines" cottages around the hills, and the mossy, overgrown gravestones commemorating forgotten personages like Sarah Chandy and the Bombay Color Sergeants.

But a deeper fascination is that modern India has so thoroughly made the language imposed on it its own, so vigorously adding condiments that it isn't quite English and isn't quite not. The history of Indlish or Englian, or whatever you want to call this hyperactive offspring of a marriage of inconvenience, begins with the merchants and adventurers of the East India Company, who first came over in the mid-17th century, and were soon taking back cashmeres and juggernauts and other semi-demi-pukka terms stolen from the Indian Empire. But it culminated most vividly in the soldiers and teachers and high-minded civil servants of later centuries, who made it their business to domesticate the East, and often got thoroughly domesticated themselves. We all know that Victoria sent railroads and bewigged solicitors and Thomas Babington Macaulay to India; what we're liable to forget is that by the middle of the 19th century, according to one account, India had sent 26,000 words back into English, many of them as familiar as your pajamas or veranda.

The grand old mildewed registry of this communion, of course, is *Hobson-Jobson*, "a portly double-columned edifice," as Henry Yule calls it in his preface of 1886, which began with a series of letters and took its name, improbably, from an Englished version of "the wailings of the Mohammedans as they beat their breasts in the procession of Moharram—'Ya Hasan! Ya Hosain!'" Three centuries of backstairs meetings seem to hide out in this monumental dictionary of Anglo-Indian speech, and a whole world comes into view when one reads that a "Lady Kenny" is a "black ball-shaped syrupy confection" named after the Lady Canning to whom it was first presented, and a "James and Mary" is the name of "a famous sandbank in the Hooghly River behind Calcutta." Every inflection of what was once known as Butler English and Kitchen English is spelled out with a gravity worthy of the facts of life, and besides reading solemn explications of

"pish-posh" and "ticky-tock" and the derivation of "burra-beebee," you can learn that "a four and twenty" meant "a criminal" and "ducks" referred to the "gentlemen belonging to the Bombay service." "Home," the venerable archive informs one, "in Anglo-Indian and colonial speech…means England."

Nowadays, as Salman Rushdie notes, imperialism is reversed not only on the page, and any Englishman worth his salt—any tycoon or pundit or thug, in fact—knows all about gurus and mantras and yoga. "They gave us the language," as a character says in Hanif Kureishi's novel, *The Black Album*, "but it is only we who know how to use it." Those who marvel at the rutputty masala mixes in Rushdie's novels are apt to exaggerate the magic and underestimate the realism. A walk down any Bombay street is not unlike a journey through any chapter of *Midnight's Children*.

The shouting vitality of Indian English is mostly enshrined in the signs and sentences—and even sentiments—that bombard you as you bump around a land of Eve-teasers and newspaper wallahs, symptoms of a palimpsest culture that never throws anything away but takes every new influence or import and throws it into the mix. Sometimes it seems the whole subcontinent is just a mess of bromides, axioms, apothegms, and rules, all religiously observed in the breach.

Even the simplest trip down any Indian street becomes a pilgrimage through a gallery of warnings. Some of them—"Do Not Cross Verge" or (on a narrow mountain road) "Watch for Shooting Stones"—make a certain kind of antic sense; but others—"Stop for Octroi," for example—I'm still trying to puzzle out.

A stranger aspect of this somewhat bossy strain is that every injunction, however sublime, is undone by a habitual conversion into singsong. India to this day remains a jingler's paradise, and the "Lane Driving Is Sane Driving" signs I recall from a decade ago have now been joined by tinkly little caveats that trill, "Reckless Drivers Kill and Die/Leaving All Behind to Cry" (or, more laconically, "Risk-Taker Is Accident-Maker"). One of the abiding delights of Indian English is that much of it reads as if it had been composed by a schoolmaster conspiring with a maiden aunt (called Mrs. Malaprop, perhaps) and drawing, principally, on the works of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear. How can one resist a place where the "matrimonial notices" in local newspapers offer brides who are "artful, homely, and wheat-colored"? And where a "cousin-in-law" said hopefully to me at a Matrimonial Felicitation Function last year, "The ceremonies should be quite pompous."

Yet in the right hands this curious hybrid's very affectations can seem merely aspirations, and it is often the straining toward a grandeur vanished or always out of reach that is so touching here. Tiny, ramshackle huts present themselves as "Marriage Palaces" and rickety buses that cannot write "Stage Carriage" on their sides inscribe "Semi-Deluxe." Even a public toilet I encountered had, with a trademark Indian mix of strictness and idealism, "Beautification" written on one side and "Coordination" on the other.

It is as if words in the subcontinent were still assumed to have a magic they've lost at home, as if calling a place "Reliable" or "Honesty" were the first step toward making it so. Not that Indian courtesy is always innocent. "Any Exchange Fault or Communications Error," a sign in a public phone office advised me, "Is on Customer's Account. Thanks." Some of the terms you see in India have curious meanings (the cafes advertising "fingers," I learned, were only selling "finger chips," or french fries), and some of them just look as if they do. ("Video Shooting We Undertake,"a tiny photo shop informed me.) Some meticulously preserve now fading customs, and some confer a gay Edwardian tilt on even the most everyday transactions. ("I'm sorry," I was told when I called up the editor of a movie magazine, "Miss Sonaya is not in her cabin just now,"

which made me imagine her, perhaps not incorrectly, on a cruise ship.) At Elphinstone College, in the redbrick Victorian heart of the University of Bombay, I was greeted by an "Institute of Distance Education" just down the corridor from a "Backward Class Cell." And in the city's most famous Hindu temple a sign advised, "Devotees are warned that to sit on the rocks much deep in the sea water away from the sea shore is not only encroachment on government property but is also dangerous to their lives, including valuable ornaments."

Whether or not my life was a valuable ornament, I came away feeling that Indian English is not just a savory stepmother tongue to hundreds of millions of Indians (more Indians, after all, speak English than Englishmen do), and not just an invaluable memento of a centuries-long mishmash, but also a grand and distinctive product of a culture as verbally supple and full of energy as any I know. Six years ago, India at last opened its borders wide to foreign companies, and when last I was in Bombay, "cyberprofessional" and "brand name equity" were the terms of the moment, bandied about by the young in their MTV-furnished pubs, as they spoke with studied casualness of "air-dashing." In the newspapers, editorials that still drew, with surprising frequency, upon the example and wisdom of Bertram Wooster sat next to ads that promised a "Mega Exhibition Showcase of Ideal Lifestyle."

Yet this stubbornly anachronistic tongue, out of date even when it was first imported, suggests that there'll always be an England, if only because there'll always be an India. As I prepared to air-dash away—being asked my "good name" one last time, in Delhi's airport, near signs that said "Be Like Venus: Unarmed" and an office on the runway labeled "Apron Control"—I wondered how far I was really going. "Blighty," after all, is the Hindi word for "foreign."

Excerpted from "English in India: Still All the Raj," which appeared in the New York Times *August 10, 1997. Pico Iyer is the author, most recently, of the book* Tropical Classical.

Hobson-Jobson

*An anglicization of the Arabic expression, "*Ya Hasan! Ya Hosain!*" "Hobson-Jobson" is a generic term for words and phrases modified from indigenous Indian languages to approximate sounds already familiar in English (akin to the American term "Spanglish" [Spanish+English]).* Hobson-Jobson*—which became an alternative title for Yule and Burnell's 1868* Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases*—included direct borrowings like* pajamas *and* verandah*, as well as more fanciful terms. Below are a few of the expressions that are heard in* Indian Ink*:*

babu: (from the Hindi word for "father") a gentleman or an Indian clerk who writes English; today often used disparagingly to mean an Indian with some English education.
char: tea (from the Hindi *chai*, "tea"); *Tahsa char, garumi garum* ("fresh tea, hot, hot") is a common train-station tea vendor's cry.
dak: post; a *dak bungalow* is a rather spartan government guest house for travelers.
dhobi: laundry or washerman.
ghat: a mountain pass, named for the two mountain ranges along the coasts of southern India; also a flight of steps leading down to a river landing for ritual bathers.
gymkhana: sports ground or sports meeting.
kedgeree: a dish consisting of boiled rice, eggs, and fish or vegetables (from the Hindi *khichri*).
maidan: public land or parade ground.
mulaquatis: petitioners.
pani: water.
peg: a shot of whiskey; *burra-peg* is a double whiskey (*burra-* is a prefix meaning "great" or "big," thus a *burra-khana* is a "big dinner" or "celebration").
pukkah: proper or real; a *pukkah sahib* is a "real gentleman."
punkah: fan (from the Hindi *pankha*, "fan"); a palm frond, or a large, fixed swinging fan formed of cloth stretched on a rectangular frame, attached to the ceiling and kept in motion by a servant (*punkah-wallah*) to circulate the air in a room.
Raj: rule (from Sanskrit), typically used to identify the years of British rule in India.
sahib: sir (from the Hindi *sahib*, "master"); used in colonial India as a form of respectful address for a European man; a *memsahib* is a lady (from "madam-sahib").
tiffin: luncheon.
wallah: man or fellow (from the Hindi *wala*, "inhabitant"); used to form typical Anglo-Indian compounds that identify someone specifically by his trade (e.g., a *char-wallah* is a tea vendor, a *pani-wallah* is a water carrier, and a *tiffin-wallah* sells meals); incorporated into contemporary Indian English in some amusingly modern constructions (e.g., *Pepsi-wallah*, *Coke-wallah*).

Emily Eden

Emily Eden (1797–1869) was born in Westminster, England, on March 3, 1797, the seventh daughter of fourteen children. When her mother died in 1818, Emily moved in with her sister Fanny and her brother George. From 1835 to 1842, she accompanied George, the governor-general of India, on his travels through much of the Indian empire.

Indian Ink *concludes with Flora Crewe reading from* Up the Country *(1866), Emily's book of letters about those travels. Eden's other books include* Portraits of the People and Princes of India *(1844),* The Semi-detached House *(1859), and* The Semi-attached Couple *(1860), and* Letter from India *(1872).*

Below are additional excerpts from Up the Country *that bring to life the India Emily knew and loved a century before Flora's arrival in Jummapur.*

Under the Curse of Railroads

By 1866, when she wrote to her publisher—her nephew Lord William Godolphin Osborne—to introduce the letters, Eden had realized that India had already begun to change drastically under British influence:

> I know no one but yourself who can now take any lively interest in these Letters.
>
> She to whom they were addressed, they of whom they were written, have all passed away, and you and I are now almost the only survivors of the large party that in 1838 left Government House for the Upper Provinces....
>
> Now that India has fallen under the curse of railroads, and that life and property will soon become as insecure there as they are here, the splendour of a Governor-General's progress is at an end.
>
> The Kootub will probably become a Railway Station; the Taj will, of course, under the sway of an Agra Company (Limited, except for destruction), be bought up for a monster hotel; and the Governor-General will dwindle down into a first-class passenger with a carpet-bag. These details, therefore, of a journey that was picturesque in its motley processions, in its splendid crowds, and in its "barbaric gold and pearl," may be thought amusing. So many changes have since taken place in Indian modes of travelling, that these contrasts of public grandeur and private discomfort will probably be seen no more, on a scale of such magnitude.

On Life on the Road

> March 2, 1838: We arrived here yesterday; a great ugly scattered cantonment, all barracks, and dust, and guns, and soldiers; and G[eorge] had a levee in the morning, and we were "at home" in the evening; and the officers of four regiments, with their wives and daughters, all came and danced. The fashions are even again behind those of Delhi....
>
> Yesterday as we were stepping over the street to luncheon, there appeared an interesting procession of tired coolies carrying boxes—our English boxes that had come plodding after us from Allahabad. I was in

hopes Mr. D's bonnets would have come out of one of them, but we heard in the evening that they are at least a month off, and in the meantime the unpacking of these was immense fun.

April 13, 1838: Another grievance that took Wright and me by surprise was, that of all our head tailors whom we had brought from Calcutta, none had ever seen the drapery of a curtain. Bengal has no curtains; so Wright had to cut out everything herself. It is in these times of emergency that the value of the European servants rises.

On the Heat

June 13, 1838: The weather is very hot here now, much hotter than an English summer; at least nobody can go out after seven or before six, and the nights are very close; but of course everybody says it is a most extraordinary season, as they always do in India. It must end in rain soon; if it does not, the famine of this unfortunate country will be worse than ever. Captain M and Mr. B have both been ill with the dreadful heat at Adeenanuggur, and Dr. D seems very anxious to get them away from there.

On the "Queen's Ball"

May 25, 1839 [the letter Flora reads in *Indian Ink*]: The Queen's ball "came off" yesterday with great success. We had had, the beginning of the week, three days of rain, which frightened us, because it is a rain that nothing can stand. It did us one good deed on Monday—washed away the 24 people who were coming to dine with us, which was lucky, as the greater part of the dinner prepared for them was also washed away by the rain breaking the skylight in the dining-room and *plumping* down on the table. I went down by myself to Annandale on Thursday evening, to see how things were going on there, and found X, who has been encamped there for three days, walking about very conjugally with Mrs. N, to whom he is engaged. I felt rather *de trop* as they stepped about with me, showing off the preparations. It was a very pretty-looking fete; we built one temporary sort of room which held 50 people, and the others dined in two large tents on the opposite side of the road, but we were all close together, and drank the Queen's health at the same moment with much cheering. Between the two tents there was a boarded platform for dancing, roped and arched in with flowers, and then in different parts of the valley, wherever the trees would allow of it, there was "Victoria," "God Save the Queen," and "Candahar" in immense letters 12 feet high. There was a very old Hindu temple also prettily lit up. Vishnu, or Mahadevi, to whom I believe it really belonged, must have been affronted. The native dealers in sweetmeats came down to sell their goods to the servants and jonpaunees, and C and X went round and bought up all their supplies for about 20 rupees for the general good. We dined at six, then had fireworks, and coffee, and then they all danced till twelve. It was the most beautiful evening; such a moon, and the mountains looked so soft and *grave*, after all the fireworks and glare.

Twenty years ago no European had ever been here, and there we were, with the band playing the "Puritani" and "Masaniello," and eating salmon from Scotland, and sardines from the Mediterranean, and observing that St. Cloup's potage a la Julienne was perhaps better than his other soups, and that some of the ladies' sleeves were too tight according to overland fashions for March, &c; and all this in the face of those high hills, some of which have remained untrodden since the creation, and we, 105 Europeans, being surrounded by at least 3,000 mountaineers, who, wrapped up in their hill blankets, looked on at what we call our polite amusements, and bowed to the ground if a European came near them. I sometimes wonder they do not cut all our heads off, and say nothing more about it.

British Women in India

In her book *Women of the Raj*, Margaret MacMillan describes the lives of British women—both conventional and unconventional—who lived in India during the 17th to 19th centuries.

The Color of Their Minds
From 1978 to 1983, women who had once been *memsahibs* in India were interviewed by the Cambridge South Asian Archive. When asked for their views on the Raj, most agreed with the following statements:

> *—The Raj was one of the most wonderful achievements ever known.*
> *—We [the British] put more into India than we took out.*
> *—The peasant always loved the Raj.*
> *—We took it for granted that our rule was fair and just and beneficial.*

In 1883, some of the strongest anti-Indian views were voiced when the Ilbert Bill was introduced. This statute would have allowed Indian judges, trained in Britain, to preside over European cases in Indian courts. British men and women objected to the bill, wielding its perceived threat to British women as the main argument against it. They argued that giving Indians such power would allow them to believe they were equals [of the British], which could lead to the rape and general ruin of British women:

> *Our gentle young women, no matter how beautiful and young, no matter how refined and modest and delicate, must be compelled to appear in a native court before a native judge with a raised veil.*
>
> —A barrister in Allahabad writing to a local newspaper

> *Have we not enough to endure in India, isolated as we often are, suffering from the climate and separated from our children, without the addition of a constant fear of personal attack?*
>
> —"Indignation" writing to *The Pioneer*

> *It is not the colour of their skins, it is the colour of their minds which we object to.*
>
> —"An Englishwoman" writing to *The Pioneer*

In March 1919, when the Rowlatt Acts were passed, extending the wartime suspension of civil liberties, peaceful protest marchers led by Mahatma Gandhi turned into violent mobs. Riots broke out in Amritsar, in the Punjab, which resulted in the beating of British missionary Miss Frances Sherwood. General Reginald Dyer responded with the "Amritsar Massacre" and the imposition of martial law. Dyer decreed that any Indians passing the spot where Sherwood had been beaten must do so on their hands and knees. When the government of India sent a committee of inquiry and forced Dyer to resign in 1920, the majority of the British in the Punjab were furious. The Dyer Appreciation Fund was formed by several women to raise money to present the "Saviour of the Punjab" with a Sword of Honour and purse in gratitude for saving them all from "murder, torture, arson, looting, and wholesale anarchy."

> *We look upon women as sacred or ought to. I was searching my brain for a suitable punishment to meet this awful case.*
>
> —General Dyer

> *The Indian agitators who strove to wreck their country's weal, go unscathed, free to carry on their fiendish schemes (who can tell with what dread results?). The British General,* who kept the peace of India*, is pilloried and degraded.*
>
> —Florence Holland, head of the Dyer Appreciation Fund

The Naga Queen

A few British women, however, left home for India to try to make a difference in the world and in their own lives.

Flora Annie Steel, who lived in India between 1867 and 1889, learned to read and write in the vernacular and made many Indian friends. After she was appointed Inspectress of the Girls' Schools in the Punjab, she discovered that degrees were being sold at Punjab University. She protested this injustice so vigorously that the government tried to transfer her husband to a remote post. She refused to move. When an official asked Mr. Steel to keep his wife in order, he responded, "Take her for a month and try." The government eventually looked into the situation at the university.

Steel also collaborated on *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook*, a book that encourages British women to maintain an attitude of enthusiasm and cheerfulness while in India. She disliked British women who complained of hardship or boredom in their new homes.

Annie Besant had a reputation in England for energetically espousing such controversial causes as socialism and birth control. In the 1890s, after meeting Gandhi (while he was a law student) and Madame Helena Blavatsky (founder of the Theosophical Society), she focused her considerable energy on India. In 1891, Besant became president of the Theosophical Society in England. In 1893, she moved to the society's colony in India, where she took up the cause of Indian nationalism. After she helped form the Home Rule Leagues during World War I, the government had her arrested, at the age of 69. By the time she was released, months later, she had become so popular that the Indian National Congress elected her president.

Amy Carmichael spent 50 years as a missionary in India. Most of the British believed that religious work might upset the natives, and, indeed, less than two percent of India's population converted to Christianity. Some missionaries, however, were also feminists and worked for the progress of Indian women. In the 1890s, Carmichael raised British eyebrows when she took several Indian children on holiday with her. When she began to wear Indian clothing, she was accused of "damaging British prestige."

Poet Adela Florence Cory, who wrote as Laurence Hope, married Malcolm Nicolson, a colonel in the Bengal Calvary, in 1889. In 1890, she disguised herself as a boy to follow her husband through the wild country on the frontier between India and Afghanistan. In 1902, she published a collection of poems on exotic themes. She committed suicide after her husband died in 1904.

Perhaps one of the most interesting accounts is that of Ursula Graham Bower, who went to India in 1937 at the age of 23 to visit friends. On a ten-day trip up to the Naga country in the hills above Imphal, she found herself quite at home:

> *It was as though I had rediscovered a world to which I had belonged the whole time; from which, by some accident, I had been estranged.…Not yet of the hills, but already divorced from my own race, I wanted nothing now but the lovely, wild reality of mountain and jungle.*

She returned to Naga country the next summer:

> *For the first time I had known responsibility, loneliness, worry, and exhaustion. I'd been revolted by wounds and filth, hampered by lack of the language, but nevertheless I was going back to it if it killed me. And I couldn't have given one sane reason why.*

Bower was adopted by a Naga tribe; she visited them so often that she was described as more like the Nagas than like her fellow Europeans, who referred to her as the "Naga Queen." When she finally married Colonel Betts, they celebrated their union with a Naga wedding with her tribe as well as a western wedding.

—Alice Moore

Observations on Heat and Relationships

Seasons in India

The British divided the Indian year into three parts—the cold weather, the hot weather (they never called it "summer," possibly to distinguish it from the civilized weather of Home), and the monsoon or "the rains."…Around March the air began to heat up, and by April the sun was scorching and baking the North.

Toward the East, in Bengal and Assam, and in the West, in Karachi, for example, the climate was wet—temperatures in the summer months were between 90 and 100°F, but the humidity was often 100 per cent. Women usually had to change their clothes four times a day. "I feel," said Rosamund Lawrence of her time in Karachi, "like a lump of sugar slowly disintegrating in a tumbler of water." Across the Plains and up in the North West the heat was drier but also greater: 100, 110, up and up the thermometer went. With their thick walls and high ceilings, the bungalows did not get quite as hot inside—a mere 95.

—*Women of the Raj*, by Margaret MacMillan

The hot weather was a time when you longed for a grey English day. The heat coming off the ground and up your shorts and hitting you in an unbelievable manner.

—*Plain Tales from the Raj*, by Charles Allen

Women in the Heat

"Don't give in to [the heat], and it will give in to you," Steel and Gardiner exhorted their readers. The women who lived in India in the heyday of the Raj could have endured the hot weather better if they had not been expected to continue to dress as though they were at Home. Even on the hottest days, they wore stockings and dresses, which fell, until after the First World War, in heavy folds to the ground; and, until standards were relaxed during the Second World War, they never went out with their arms bare. Underneath they wore petticoats and camisoles and, for much of the Raj, the inevitable stays.

—*Women of the Raj*

"My head often feels as if it were fried."

—Mrs. King in *Women of the Raj*

"Nothing is going forward, stupid as possible, shut up all day, languid and weary; this India is a vile country."

—Fanny Parks in *Women of the Raj*

Escape to the Hills

The only sure way of beating the hot weather entirely was to avoid it. The time-honoured custom of taking refuge in the Hills persisted till the Second World War.

The Hills provided a brief escape from the extremes of India's climate and culture—and something more: No Englishman of sensitivity who's been to India and loved the Hills can deny the Hindu inspiration that the Gods live in the Hills somehow.

—*Plain Tales from the Raj*

Flora's "Wendy House"

Dak bungalows were not necessarily welcoming to the weary travellers.…The bungalows themselves were spartan: two, perhaps three bedrooms with simple frame beds, a few shelves of rough planks, a couple of rickety chairs and a table. The busier ones had a servant attached to them who could produce an indifferent meal, which usually featured a tough chicken.

—*Women of the Raj*

The "Club"

At the larger stations dinner on Saturday night would be followed by a dance at the Club and on Thursdays dances were held just between tea and dinner.

As a social spot the Club verandah on a large station had few rivals.

Most were buildings of no architectural merit and were hung with pictures of "dead and gone cricket teams."

—*Plain Tales from the Raj*

If you look through the pages you will see the signatures of one or two Indian members. But they were of course all officers who held the King-Emperor's commission. By and large such gentlemen found it only comfortable to play tennis here and then go back to their quarters.

There was talk in the 'thirties of founding another club and reserving the Gymkhana for senior officers, which would have made it unlikely that any Indian officer on station would have been eligible. But the money simply wasn't available. In any case the Indian officers more or less solved the problem themselves by limiting their visits to appearances on the tennis courts. One was never known to swim in the pool, seldom to enter the bar, never to dine.

Usually it was enough for him to know that he couldn't actually be blackballed at the Gymkhana merely because he was Indian, and enough for the English members to know that he was unlikely to put in any prolonged or embarrassing appearance.

Indian officers of the civil service, even of the covenanted civil service, were not admitted as guests let alone as members. Which meant that the District and Sessions Judge, dear old Menen, such a distinguished fellow, couldn't enter, even if brought by the Deputy Commissioner. There was no written rule about it. It was simply an unwritten rule, rigorously applied, and never challenged by those it excluded.

—*The Raj Quartet*, by Paul Scott

Interracial Love

I felt as if they saw my affair with Hari as the logical but terrifying end of the attempt they had all made to break out of their separate little groups and learn how to live together—terrifying because even they couldn't face with equanimity the breaking of the most fundamental law of all—that although a white man could make love to a black girl, the black man and white girl association was still taboo.…

I took Hari into the museum room once, round about the beginning of the time when we knew that we both liked being together and so had to face the fact that there was almost no place we could be, except at his house or at Lili's. The Bibighar came a bit later. The time I took him in to the museum room we were joking about everything, but there was this sense already of cheating, of having to cheat and hide, buy time, buy privacy—paying for them with blows to our joint pride. I thought as I looked around the room, "Well, Hari and I are the exhibits too. We could stand here on a little plinth, with a

card saying "Types of Opposites: [male sign] Indo-British, circa 1942. Do Not Touch." Then all the people who stared at us in the cantonment, but looked away directly we looked at them, could come and stare to their hearts' content....

I said, "Come on, Hari—it's mouldy and dead," and held my hand out without thinking, then realised that except for dancing, casual contact like getting in and out of a tonga, we had never touched each other, even as friends, let alone as man and woman. I nearly withdrew my hand, because the longer I held it out and he hesitated to take it, the more loaded with significance the gesture became. It hadn't been meant as significant—just natural, warm and companionable. He took it finally.

—*The Raj Quartet*, by Paul Scott

An Englishwoman on Englishmen in India

After a time Sarah had been able to analyse it. They approached you first (she decided) as if you were a member of a species that had to be protected, although from what was not exactly clear if you ruled out extinction: it seemed to be enough that the idea of collective responsibility for you should be demonstrated, without regard to any actual or likely threat to your welfare. In circumstances where no threat seemed to exist the behaviour of the men aroused your suspicion that perhaps it did after all but in a way the men alone had the talent for understanding; and so you became aware of the need to be grateful to them for the constant proof they offered of being ready to defend you, if only from yourself.

This collective public approach also affected their personal, private approaches. When young men talked to her, danced or played tennis with her, invited her to go riding, to watch them play men's games, to go with them to a show, became amorous or fumbled with her unromantically in the dark of a veranda or a motor-car, she had the impression that they did so in a representative frame of mind. "Well here I am, white, male and pure-bred English, and here you are pure-bred English, white and female, we ought to be doing something about it."

—*The Raj Quartet*

A Metaphor for the British Raj

Let's imagine that the people in the house are a pretty mixed bunch, and that those who have the least say in how things are run are those the house belonged to originally. The present self-appointed owner has been saying for years that eventually, when he is satisfied that they've learned how to keep the roof repaired, the foundations secure and the whole in good order, he'll get out and give them the house back, because that's his job in life: to teach others how to make something of themselves and their property. He's been saying this long enough to believe it himself but ruling the household with a sufficiently confusing mixture of encouraging words and repressive measures to have created a feeling among his "family" that by and large he's kidding, and that the only language he understands is the language *he* uses—a combination of physical and moral pressure. He's also said he'll leave—but stayed put— long enough to create factions below stairs among the people who hope to inherit or rather get the house back.

—*The Raj Quartet*

Heat

by H.D.

O wind,
rend open the heat
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air—
fruit cannot fall in to heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat—
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

(1916)

Hilda Doolittle (1886–1961) was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She dropped out of Bryn Mawr College after failing English. In 1911, H.D. (as she was known) went to England to visit and never returned to the United States again. An early Imagist poet, she was sometimes referred to as the "Goddess of Imagism." Among her friends were Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, May Sarton, T. S. Eliot, and Elizabeth Bowen.

The *Rasa* Experience

by Jessica Werner

"My painting has no *rasa* today," laments Nirad Das to Flora Crewe in *Indian Ink*. "What is *rasa*?" responds Flora, with those three small words asking Nirad to unlock for her, and thereby for the audience, the mysteries of this ancient Sanskrit term, arguably the single most important concept of India's 2,000-year-old theory of art and aesthetics. "A painting must have its *rasa*," Nirad explains, "which is not *in* the painting, exactly. *Rasa* is what you must feel when you see a painting, or hear music; it is the emotion which the artist must arouse in you."

Rasa is still a vital term in contemporary discussions of Indian art and aesthetics, and in it Stoppard has discovered an apt guiding principle for *Indian Ink*, very much a play about the relationship between desire and creativity, and about the complex processes by which we experience both art and love.

A State of Heightened Delight

As it is most widely used in the daily parlance of India, *rasa* literally means the "juice" or "sap" of plants, fruits, and vegetables, as well as "taste" or "flavor." Secondarily, *rasa* also signifies the best or finest part of a thing, its immaterial essence or "ideal beauty," which, like perfume, is of the material world yet virtually indescribable. In its subtlest sense—most relevant to the term's application to art and aesthetics—*rasa* has come to refer to a state of heightened awareness or delight evoked by a work of visual art, drama, poetry, music, or dance. *Rasa* is that which one most hopes to experience in a work of art, and it is exalted in Hindu texts as a force capable of connecting viewers with the sublime and transporting them into a higher state of consciousness or spiritual bliss (*ananda*).

As complicated as it is seductive, *rasa* theory has captured the imaginations of centuries of artists, theoreticians, poets, and scholars and remains central to the vocabulary of 20th-century Indian art. The artistic applications of *rasa* were enunciated for the first time by Bharata, the first great theoretician of Sanskrit drama, in his *Natya shastra*, a comprehensive work on theater and dance which dates back to the beginning of the Christian era. *Rasa*'s roots in theater in fact go back even further: Bharata acknowledges a debt to his predecessors and cites the concept of *rasa* in the *Mahabhasya*, a theater treatise dated circa 150 B.C.E.

Bharata delineates in the *Natya shastra* eight specific sentiments (to which a ninth has been added by later scholars), each of which contributes to *rasa* in a particular work of art: *shringara* (the erotic), *hasya* (the comic), *karuna* (the pathetic), *raudra* (the furious), *vira* (the heroic), *bhayanaka* (the terrible), *bibhatsa* (the odious), *adbhuta* (the wondrous), and *shanta* (the quiescent). Each sentiment is associated with a presiding Hindu deity and an affiliated color scheme.

The erotic sentiment *shringara*—which has been described as "king of the sentiments" (*rasaraja*) and figures most prominently in *Indian Ink*—is presided over by the god Vishnu (most often in his incarnation as Krishna, India's archetypal hero and lover) and is linked to the color blue-black. (Krishna is always depicted pictorially as the "blue-skinned god.") The evocation of a particular *rasa* is predicated on an elaborate system of determining factors, which a viewer trains his or her eye to recognize in a work of art—"the moon, the scent of sandalwood, or being in an empty house," for example, are

known to set the stage for a *shringara* experience, as Nirad provocatively tells Flora in *Indian Ink*.

In the Eye of the Beholder

Unlike most western modes of art appreciation, India's indigenous theory of art stresses above all else the active role of the viewer. Ancient Indian thinkers like Bharata postulated that the aesthetic experience resided not within the work of art itself, nor with the artist who created it, but rather in the responsive viewer (*rasika*), who must put him- or herself in an appropriately receptive state to behold a work of art. Indian-art expert Vidya Dehejia explains that, "by way of analogy, the ancient writers pointed out that the taste of wine rests not in the jug that contains it, nor with the vintner who produced it, but with the person who tastes it." Just as the potential lover must open him- or herself to the possibility of love, so must the conneisseur of art observe with an open heart and mind, allowing for the possibility of transcendence, or *rasa*.

Both Nirad and Flora wrestle in *Indian Ink* with obstacles that stand in the way of their attempts to experience *rasa* personally. Yet, it is perhaps the academic Eldon Pike who suffers, more than any of Stoppard's characters, from a lack of understanding of *rasa*, the awareness of of which could enrich his pedantic response to Flora's life and work. Indian-art historian B. N. Goswamy describes his own awakening to the concept of *rasa* in his *Essence of Indian Art*:

> *I remember quite sharply an occasion when I took some keen doubt of mine, a small inquiry regarding the date or style of a painting, to that great connoisseur of the arts of India, the late Rai Krishna Dasa in Benaras. Rai Sahib, as he was almost universally called, heard my questions with his usual grace and patience, then leaned back on the comfortable round bolster on his simple divan and said softly: "These questions I will now leave to you eager historians of art. All that I want to do, at this stage of my life"—he was past 70 years of age then and in frail health—"is to taste* rasa.*" Nobody knew more than Rai Sahib about the kinds of questions that I had taken to him at that time, but somehow he had moved on to, or back toward, what the real meaning or purpose of art was.*

The Language of Symbols

Because India's indigenous artistic traditions developed as a means of instructing and heightening religious awareness—not simply to convey visual magnificence—symbolism has consistently been the dominant style of Indian painting. The contemporary approach to artistic analysis (including the current zeal for literary biography) which emphasizes the role of the individual artist and his or her craftsmanship above all else was alien to pre-modern India.

"To us Hindus, everything is interpreted in the language of symbols," Nirad's son, Anish, tells us in *Indian Ink*, a statement which is particularly true of India's Rajput painters, whom Nirad greatly admires. Between the early 16th and early 19th centuries, when much of northern India was under Muslim rule, art and culture flourished in the many Hindu Rajput kingdoms of northwestern India (where *Indian Ink*'s imaginary town of Jummapur is set). Rajasthani narrative art, using a palette of vibrant, saturated colors, chronicled stories from the legendary epics of Hindu literature, notably the *Ramayana* and the *Gita Govinda*, the 12th-century sacred poem by the poet-saint Jayadeva which tells, in

highly erotic detail, of Krishna's love for the cowherd girl (*gopi*) Radha. Scenes of the divine lovers' illicit assignations are read by some on a metaphorical level as the soul's longing for union with the divine, and they continue to inspire Indian artists and viewers alike.

When Eleanor Swan admonishes Anish, "Now really, Mr. Das, sometimes a vine is only a vine," she betrays her own unfamiliarity with the fact that visual elements in Indian art were not traditionally meant to be taken at face value, but rather as emblems of specific concepts and emotions drawn from centuries of shared cultural history and mythology. Rajasthani miniaturists, whose palm-leaf manuscripts and delicately brushed portraits are among India's most exquisite artistic creations, were particularly fluent in a language of symbols that still resonates with Indian viewers.

Indian miniatures have been described as "visual chamber music," meant to be savored slowly and intensely—just as one ideally would engage with a theatrical composition like *Indian Ink*—so as to enhance the probability of experiencing *rasa*.

The Most Beautiful of the Herdswomen

by Alice Moore

> *Darling, that's all from Jummapur, because now I'm packed, portrait and all, and Mr. Coomaraswami is coming to take me to the station. I'll post this in Jaipur as soon as I get there. I'm not going to post it here because I'm not. I feel fit as two lops this morning, and happy, too, because something good happened here which made me feel halfway better about Modi and getting back to Paris too late. That was a sin I'll carry to my grave, but perhaps my soul will stay behind as a smudge of paint on paper, as if I'd always been here, like Radha who was the most beautiful of the herdswomen, undressed for love in an empty house.*
>
> —Flora Crewe, writing to her sister from Jummapur in *Indian Ink*

The story of the herdswoman Radha and her divine lover, Krishna, was most famously recorded in the Hindu text the *Gita Govinda* (*The Song of the Cowherd*), written by the poet-saint Jayadeva around 1175.

Krishna ("the black one") is considered the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, one of the three gods in the Supreme Triad of Hinduism. Traditionally, Krishna was born to a human woman, but had to be whisked away at birth because of a prophecy that foretold he would kill the tyrant-king Mathura. Krishna was then raised by the cowherd Nanda and his wife, Yasoda. There are many stories about the tricks Krishna played on evil spirits and about his lovemaking with the *gopi*s (herdswomen), whom he would seduce with his flute.

The Story of the *Gita Govinda*

The *Gita Govinda* was the first work to name Krishna's lover, Radha, the wife of the cowherd Ayanaghosa and the daughter of Krishna's adoptive father, Nanda. In the *Gita Govinda*, Radha and Krishna fall in love when Radha is instructed by Nanda to take the young Krishna home. Radha is beside herself with desire, and Radha's maidservant taunts her:

> *I know where Krishna tarries: kissing one, caressing another, dashing for a third. Clothed in yellow, decked with garlands, he is dancing with his women, teasing them to madness, and the prettiest of all is dancing with him now.*

In the next seven odes, Radha and Krishna send messages to each other via the maidservant, tormenting each other into a state of unbearable longing. First Radha begs Krishna to come to her, and then Krishna begs Radha to come to him. Unfortunately, love has rendered Radha too weak to move and she cannot go to him. Krishna finally goes to her, and she angrily accuses him of having made love to other women all night. Her maidservant, however, urges her: "Look at him. Love him. Eat him. Taste him like a fruit." In the last three odes, the two finally make love, a long and lustrous affair. Krishna declares to Radha:

The luster of your teeth, bright as the moon, scatters the darkness of my fear. The fire of desire burns in my soul: let me quench it in the honey of your lips. If you are angry, stab with your eyes, chain me in your arms, and rip me to tatters with your teeth.

The *gopi*s advise Radha:

Dear, you are now to become his slayer. Approach with a slightly indolent walk, anklets languorously clashing, to let him know that your mood is now of sweetness. Bring to him those thighs, round as the trunks of elephants, letting your bosom be your guide, which now is yearning openly for his lips. Glorious, lovely woman, your majestic body is well equipped for this approaching night of war: march on, march on, to the drum beat of your jeweled, rocking belt; and having let the clank of your bracelets proclaim the pending attack, fall with sharp nails upon his breast. He waits—trembling, sweating there with joy. Embrace him fully in the dark of this perfect night.

Thereafter, their lovemaking becomes quite violent, and they awake the next morning with scratched chests, tangled hair, and broken lips. Radha implores Krishna to help her dress and prepare for the day, and he complies, despite his exalted status as the "One Being of All."

Other Versions

In other narratives, painted as well as written, Krishna summons all of the herdswomen to him with his flute. In one legend, after thousands of women answer his call, Krishna replicates himself for the thousands and takes Radha off to make love to her (in at least eight different positions). Meanwhile, the other women enjoy themselves tremendously with their individual Krishnas, in 33 forests for 33 days, engaging in many more than the "usual 16 authorized types of sexual intercourse."

The poet Candidasa wrote:

Let us not talk of that fatal flute.
It calls a woman away from her home
and drags her by the hair to that Shyam [Krishna].
A devoted wife forgets her spouse
To be drawn like a deer, thirsty and lost.
Even the wisest ascetics lose their minds
And the plants and trees delight in its sound.
What then can a helpless, innocent girl do?

The Religious Significance

The catechism of Chaitanya (1485–1533), a Bengali Vaishnavite (follower of Vishnu) Brahmin who inspired the Hare Krishna movement, points out that the love of the soul for God is the highest human spirituality:

QUESTION *Which knowledge is highest of all?*
ANSWER *There is no knowledge but devotion to Krishna.*

QUESTION	*What is counted wealth among human possessions?*
ANSWER	*He is immensely wealthy who has love for Radha-Krishna.*
QUESTION	*What is the heaviest of sorrows?*
ANSWER	*There is no sorrow except separation from Krishna.*
QUESTION	*Among songs what song is natural to creatures?*
ANSWER	*It is the song whose heart is the love-sport of Radha-Krishna.*
QUESTION	*What is chief among the objects of worship?*
ANSWER	*The name of the most adorable couple, Radha-Krishna.*

Bhakti, or devotion to a personal god, is one of the paths to liberation in Hinduism. The mythological symbol of achievement in *bhakti* is Radha, who surrenders herself utterly with an intense love and longing for her god, the embodiment of perfect devotion. In many Hindu sects, Radha is worshipped alongside Krishna.

Taken at face value, Radha was a married older woman, and her affair with Krishna would have been considered adulterous. Because Krishna is a god, however, their union symbolizes the highest of Hindu values, that of the love of the devotee for her god. Radha symbolizes the human soul, constantly yearning to unite with the divine. Their love is therefore considered "pure," in contrast to worldly, lust-driven love.

In still other interpretations, Radha is seen as one incarnation of Lakshmi, the goddess/wife of Vishnu. Her lovemaking with Vishnu/Krishna then symbolizes the creation of future generations, or the (re)making of the world.

A Guide to People, Places, and Events Mentioned in *Indian Ink*

Compiled by Paul Walsh

Theosophical Society

In general, theosophy refers to a broad spectrum of occult or mystical philosophies, often pantheistic in nature. The western tradition derives from the neo-Platonists of the Renaissance and is thought to provide a universal key to nature and humanity's role in nature.

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who, in such books as *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), elaborated an amalgamation of previous theories that were claimed to be derived from the *mahatmas* of ancient India. The Theosophical Society grew rapidly in Europe and the United States. Its two most influential adherents were Annie Besant and Rudolf Steiner.

After the death of Madame Blavatsky in 1891, a battle for leadership of the society ensued, from which Besant emerged as leader in Europe and Asia, with its international headquarters in Adyar, just outside of the city of Madras in India. W. Q. Judge led a secessionist movement in the United States. In 1911 Besant put forward Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986) as an incarnation of Maitreya, the world teacher. The Order of the Star in the East was founded around Krishnamurti to promote his messianic teachings. In 1929, Krishnamurti dissolved the movement and soon after broke with the theosophists, settling in California.

Besant, an old friend of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, had been a Fabian socialist and secularist before founding the Hindu Central College at Benares to preach the "New Hinduism." Besant also played a decisive role in the founding of the Indian National Congress, as Beatrice Webb noted in her diaries: "It is strange that the dominant personality of an English woman is the only chance of securing common action among Hindus for the teaching of the National Religion."

"Queen's Elm. Which Queen? What Elm?…It's a pub in the Fulham Road."

To be exact, 241 Fulham Road in Chelsea. The pub was named after an elm tree underneath which Queen Elizabeth I took shelter during a rain storm while walking up Church Street with Lord Burghley. Though the rain shower was heavy, the queen remained dry: "Let this henceforth be called the Queen's Tree," she proclaimed and an arbor was built on the spot that lasted into the 17th century. Though the present building dates only from 1914, an earlier building on the site was first licensed as the Queen's Elm in 1667.

H. G. Wells

The English writer Herbert George Wells (1866–1946) was considered one of the most prominent literary personalities in the English-speaking world between 1895 and 1920. With Jules Verne, he invented science fiction. He also excelled in the comic novel and was a self-appointed prophet and popular advisor to the public on virtually every problem that confronted the modern world. By the time he was 30, Wells had already embarked on his famous series of scientific romances, including such novels as *The Invisible Man*, *The Time Machine*, and *The War of the Worlds*. His *Outline of History* (1920) is considered one of the best single-volume histories of humankind ever compiled by a single author.

"Paris, yes…no, 1924…it's a souvenir of the Olympic Games. / Oh yes, the hurdler. Flora apologized publicly in the Chelsea Arts Club. No medals for us in the *hurdles*."
The 1924 Paris Olympic games are remembered in Britain as the Olympics when British sprinter Harold Abrahamson set a new Olympic record in the 100-meter sprint (which event inspired the film *Chariots of Fire*). Though considered by many the finest hurdler of his day, English hurdler Lord Burghley was eliminated, to the surprise of many, in the first round of the 110-meter hurdles that year. Burghley returned in 1928 to win the gold in the 400-meter hurdles.

The Chelsea Arts Club was founded in 1891 with the idea of providing (male) artists with a center where they could enjoy good company and good food at reasonable prices. Thea Holme writes in *Chelsea: A Cultural History* (1971): "There was always a large open fire in the billiard-room bar, the holy of holies, where even today women are not allowed, although they have invaded the rest of the club, to the indignation of many of its members."

"they read the *New Statesman* and the *TLS* as if they were the Bible in parts"
The *New Statesman* began publication in 1913, promising to continue the best traditions of the English weekly reviews but from a fresh critical standpoint. Its bias was socialist and George Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb were among its early contributors. By the time it became the *New Statesman and Nation* in 1931, the contributors had come to include some of the most notable names of the socialist thirties.

George Bernard Shaw
Besides writing some of the finest plays of the 20th century, George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was one of the most influential critics and public figures of his day.

"The Chelsea of Turner and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood!—Rossetti lived in Cheen Walk! Holman Hunt lived in Old Church Street! *The Hireling Shepherd* was painted in Old Church Street! What an inspiration it would be to me to visit Chelsea!"
Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) is often regarded as the greatest landscape painter of 19th-century Europe. The Pre-Raphaelites were a coalition of British painters united in their distaste for formal academic art and the neoclassical style that dominated the art of the early 19th century. The principal members of the movement were Holman Hunt (1827–1910), John Everett Millais (1829–96), and poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882). Founded in 1848, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood also included James Collinson, William Michael Rossetti, Frederic George Stephens, and Thomas Woolner.

The group selected the name because of their belief that Raphael was the source of the academic tradition they abhorred. They advocated a return to the "purer vision" of Gothic and early Renaissance art. The Pre-Raphaelites rejected the academic tradition of artifical poses, unnatural color, and what they saw as trivial subjects, looking instead to the Gothic past for inspiration. They favored religious, mythological, historical, and literary subjects, which they regarded as serious and inspirational. Their work was characterized by vivid color, rich detail, elaborate symbolism, and moral fervor.

Although the brotherhood disbanded about 1854, its ideas attracted many talented adherents, including Ford Madox Brown, the visionary painter Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and William Morris, the founder of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The influence of the Pre-Raphaelite movement was particularly important to the development of Art Nouveau and the European symbolist movement.

Rossetti in fact lived on Cheyne Walk (not "Cheen Walk"). The name derives from the family who were lords of the manor of Chelsea from 1660 to 1712.

"I work in oils, Winsor and Newton."
Winsor and Newton was a famous British manufacturer of oil paints. The brand is still considered a mark of excellence and favored by many contemporary painters.

"not that Modigliani was anybody at the time"
Italian painter and sculptor Amedeo Modigliani (1894–1920) developed a unique style of painting in Paris during the early years of the 20th century. Today his graceful portraits and lush nudes at once evoke his name, but during his brief career few, apart from his fellow artists, were aware of his genius. Modigliani struggled against poverty and substance abuse throughout his life and died of tuberculosis at 35.

"the bric-a-brac is on the Wilton…the souvenir of Broadstairs"
Bric-a-brac is a miscellaneous collection of often antique curios. A Wilton, named for a borough in England, is a carpet woven with loops like a Brussels carpet but having a velvet cut pile and being generally of better materials. Broadstairs is a seaside resort in the district of Broadstairs and St. Peters in northeast Kent on the Channel near Ramsgate.

"the actions against the Raj during the Empire Day celebrations in Jummapur"
Empire Day was celebrated on May 24, Queen Victoria's birthday. The "Empire Day" riots in Jummapur in 1930 had been anticipated, and perhaps precipitated, by Gandhi's march to the sea in late March/early April to gather "illicit" sea salt in defiance of the British government monopoly on the use and sale of salt, which had to be purchased in government shops. Millions followed Gandhi's example of civil disobedience and British jails filled to capacity in a few months.

"He liked to read in English. Robert Browning, Tennyson, Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, and Dickens, of course."
Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–92), was considered the preeminent English poet of his time. On the basis of such well-beloved shorter poems as "Ulysses," "Morte d'Arthur," and "The Lady of Shalott," Tennyson was named Poet Laureate and began publishing his "national epic," *Idylls of the King* (1859–85), a retelling of the Arthurian legends.

Most famous today for his dramatic monologues, Robert Browning (1812–89) ranks with Tennyson as one of the greatest Victorian poets.

"He went from a vernacular school to Elphinstone College in Bombay, and you only have to look at Elphinstone College to see that it was built to give us a proper English education."
Elphinstone College is named for Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779–1859), British colonial administer in Bombay in the first half of the 19th century and a major early advocate for giving Indians an English education. Elphinstone, who came to Calcutta early in the century as a civil servant with the East India Company, devised the administrative system of the Raj that shared administrative leadership with traditional indigenous rulers.

"The Rising of 1857…Oh, you mean the Mutiny."
What the British call the *Sepoy* Mutiny is referred to by many Indians as their first war of independence. It was initiated in Meerut on May 10, 1857 by Indian troops (*sepoys*) of the

British Indian Army. The insurrection was triggered when the British introduced new rifle cartridges rumored to be greased with oil made from animal fat (fat of sacred cows was taboo to Indian Hindus as pig fat was to Indian Muslims). The revolt soon spread to large sectors of the civilian population. British response to the revolt was barbaric in its violence, as captured rebels were hacked apart and shot from cannons.

The revolt, which was eventually suppressed in March 1858, played a pivotal role in Anglo-Indian history. The British afterward became cautious and defensive about their empire, while many Indians remained bitter and would never trust their rulers again.

"We made you a proper country! And when we left you fell straight to pieces like Humpty Dumpty! Look at the map!"
Among the legacies of "Partition" of the British Indian Colony into India, West Pakistan, and East Pakistan in August 1947 were the ongoing hostilities between Hindus and Muslims. The first outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan came only months after Partition when Pakistani and Indian forces went to war over Kashimir, a princely state during the British Raj. In 1971 fighting broke out for the third time between Pakistani and Indian forces, this time in the area known today as Bangladesh, which proclaimed its independence from Pakistan that year.

"I have to thank Lord Macaulay for English, you know. It was his idea when he was in the government of India that English should be taught to us all. He wanted to supply the East India Company with clerks, but he was sowing dragon's teeth. Instead of babus he produced lawyers, journalists, civil servants, he produced Gandhi!"
Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59) was a statesman, historian, and essayist and the founder of the Whig school of history. When Macaulay entered Parliament in 1830 he became a noted orator on the causes of reform, toleration, and the abolition of slavery. Macaulay served in British India 1834–38, where as a member of the governor's council he helped establish a British-style educational system. He also drafted a penal code that became the basis of India's criminal law. "Sowing dragon's teeth" is a proverbial reference to the myth of Cadmus and the founding of Thebes.

"We have a Daimler at the Residency. I'll see if I can wangle it."
An early German automobile named for inventer and engineer Gottlieb Daimler (1834–1900) who constructed and patented the first high-speed internal combustion engine in 1885. Daimler founded the Daimler Motor Company in 1890, which later merged with Karl Benz's company as Daimler-Benz, the predecessor of Mercedes-Benz.

"Like Hanuman, he is my favourite in the Ramayana. The monkey god."
The monkey-god Hanuman is a central figure in the great Hindu epic *Ramayana*. Child of a nymph by the wind-god, Hanuman aided Rama in recovering his wife, Sita, from the demon Ravana by bridging the strait between India and Ceylon with boulders brought from the Himalayas with help of a pack of monkeys. Hanuman is revered especially in southern India, where there are numerous temples in his honor.

"But Jummapur was a Native State."
The fictional state of Jummapur was modelled by Stoppard on the 562 small principalities of India governed by local princes, rajahs, and maharajahs. While the British had significant influence in these areas, which were said to be "native states," or under "native rule," they were not officially part of the three-fifths of India under direct British rule.

“The other one reminded me of Dr. Aziz in Forster’s novel.”

A Passage to India, by E. M. Forster, was published in 1924. Narayana Menon writes in *E. M. Forster: A Tribute* (1964): “Today it has become synonymous with any bridge of sympathy and understanding that exists between two countries and civilisations. The intimacy with which Forster enters into the mind of Indians is astonishing, almost incredible. The book has that personal, leisurely manner that a writer achieves only when he is writing at ease, about people and things he is sure of and happy with. I do not think any foreigner has ever written with the same insight about India and her people. Forster first visited India in 1912. he returned to the country again in 1922. Though his stay was not very long, with his usual insight he found his way inside the heart of the people and felt India’s pulse. He loved the country, of course. But he is no Indophile. He saw every side of India—the age-old wisdom, the British Raj at work, poverty, wealth, political demonstrations, the dust, the beauty, the good manners, and the hospitality, the small act of dishonesty. It is all in *A Passage to India*. As one ends the book, one is left with the feeling that here is an author who is troubled about her troubles, joyous of her joys, sad about her sorrows—and one cannot ask for more.”

In Mel Gussow’s *Conversations with Stoppard*, Gussow suggests that “it was daring to mention *A Passage to India* in the course of the play.” “No, it was necessary,” Stoppard replies. “Otherwise, it’s hanging over the play like an unacknowledged ghost. It turned out to be rather convenient. I set the play in 1930 without thinking about the fact that *A Passage to India* had been published in 1924. I think I felt, well I’d better get this one out into the open….I love Forster. He writes the sort of novel which is the only kind of novel I wish to read at all when I’m in the mood to read a novel. If I feel like reading fiction I find I really don’t want to read the newest fiction. I like to go back to rather well-trod paths, with some exceptions. I want to read for the first time books of a period which I’ve never read. I read for solace rather than for stimulation.”

“‘The Enemy’ was J. C. Squire…literary editor of the *New Statesman* and editor of the *London Mercury*.”

J. C. Squire edited the *London Mercury* from its founding in 1919 through 1934. Before coming to the *Mercury*, Squire had developed a considerable reputation as a parodist, poet, and literary journalist for the *New Statesman*.

“a casualty of Partition…burned in the riots”

“Partition,” or the division in 1947 of the British Indian colony into Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India, was accompanied by mass migration and massacre as six million Hindus and Sikhs migrated to India from West Pakistan and as many Muslims migrated from India. By 1950 an additional four million Hindus had migrated from East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) and an additional million Muslims had left. Massacres were reported on both sides.

“Gandhi’s ‘March to the Sea’ to protest the Salt Tax began at Ahmedabad on March 12th. He reached the sea on the day this letter was written.”

Gandhi reached the coast at Dandi on April 5, 1930, with thousands of followers who had joined him along the way. The next day he walked onto the beach at Dandi and picked up sea salt in defiance of the Salt Act. Riots broke out all over India as millions followed Gandhi’s example of civil disobedience.

Shortly after his assassination in 1948, Gandhi was remembered by E. M. Forster in the following words: “Though he impinged upon events and influenced politics, Gandhi had his roots outside time, and drew strength thence. He is with the

founders of religion, whether he founds a religion or not. He is with the great artists, though art was not his medium. He is with all the men and women who have sought something in life that is neither chaos nor mechanism, who have not confused happiness with possessiveness, or victory with success, and who have believed in love."

"Charles Dickens lived in Doughty Street. / Yes, Eleanor lives in Doughty Street. / But, Miss Crewe, *Oliver Twist* was written in that very street!"
Built 1792–1810, Doughty Street was named after the landlord, Henry Doughty. At No. 14 lived Sydney Smith, a confirmed Londoner, who wrote: "I have no relish for the country. It is a kind of healthy grave." No. 49 is the only surviving London house of Charles Dickens, who lived here with his family from 1837 to 1839 while he wrote the later chapters of *Pickwick Papers*, as well as *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Joshua Chamberlain
Tom Stoppard has said that he always puts a character named Chamberlain in his plays because his secretary's name was once Chamberlain. Stoppard calls Joshua Chamberlain "the Byron [an important offstage character in his 1993 play *Arcadia*] of *Indian Ink*."

"When you stood…with the pitcher of water, you were an Alma-Tadema."
The reference here is to the most famous painting by academic classicist painter Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836–1912).

"Kipling—there's a poet! 'Though I've belted you and flayed you, by the living Gawd that made you, you're a better man than I am Gunga Din!'"
English novelist, poet, and short-story writer Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)—author of *The Jungle Book*, *Kim*, and *Captains Courageous*—is best remembered for his celebrations of British imperialism and his jingoistic depictions of British ideals of duty and self-abnegation in India during the Raj. "Gunga Din" is one of his best known poems.

"The only poet I *know* is Alfred Housman….He hauled me through 'Ars Amatoria' when I was up at Trinity….When it comes to love, he said, you're either an Ovid man or a Virgil man—*omnia vincit amor*—that's Virgil—'Love sweeps all before it, and we give way to love'— *et nos cedamus amori*. Housman was an Ovid man—*et mihi cedet amor*—'Love gives way to me.'"
The Resident's thought here succinctly summarizes a major theme of Stoppard's new play *The Invention of Love*, in which English poet and classical scholar A. E. Housman (1859–1936) is featured. Housman's deceptively simple lyrics explore a poignant sense of profound loss in the realization that the young are doomed to die, that nature is cruel, that beauty is fleeting and that seeking achievements is futile.

"The *box-wallah*s would have their own and the government people would stick together, you know how it is—and the Army…"
Box-wallah is a derogatory term for an English businessman in India, derived from a Hindi construction meaning "door-to-door salesman." British life in India was governed by very strict adherence to protocol: "At the top of the heap stood, confidently, the members of the Indian Civil Service, at the bottom the *box-wallah*s, a disdainful term for businessmen and others unfortunate enough to be 'in trade.' Lest anyone lose his

place in this bizarre social jungle a 'Warrant of Precedence,' governmentally published and periodically revised, elucidated the right arrangement of guests at various functions so that one need never be flummoxed about putting an agricultural chemist above or below a sanitary commissioner at a formal luncheon or dinner" (John Bradley, *Lady Curzon's India* [1985]).

"Indianization. It's all over, you know. We have Indian officers in the Regiment now. My fellow Junior here is Indian, too, terribly nice chap—he's ICS, passed the exam, did his year at Cambridge, learned polo and knives-and-forks, and here he is, a *pukkah sahib* in the Indian Civil Service."
The Indian Civil Service was a system of administration set up by the British for governing their holdings in India; appointment to the ICS by examination was opened to Indians in 1854, creating a new educated elite class of civil servants. By 1909 there were 60 Indians in the service, which numbered 1,142 members. The Government of India Act of 1919 enabled ICS examinations to be held in India and Burma as well as London, thereby making it easier for Indian candidates and accelerating the process of Indianization of the service. Successful British candidates to the ICS served a mandatory probationary year at Cambridge, Oxford, or London where they were provided with courses in Indian law, history, and an appropriate vernacular language. At the end of the year they were examined and then had to pass a riding test. Indian candidates had a two-year probationary period (reduced to one year in 1937).

"Bagpipe Music" (1937) by Louis MacNeice
Louis MacNeice, from Belfast, studied classics and philosophy at Oxford and then taught at the Univesities of Birmingham and London in the 1930s before going on to work for the BBC. "Bagpipe Music" is included in MacNeice's *Collected Poems* (1967).

"and the voice of Bush House is heard in the land"
Bush House on Aldwych opposite St. Mary Le Strand has, since 1940, housed (and become synonymous with) the BBC's External (overseas) Radio Services.

"Ah yes, I couldn't resist the headlamps. So enormous, like the eggs of a chromium bird. / Yes—a Brancusi! / You know them all, Miss Crewe!"
Romanian-born Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957) is still considered one of the most innovative and influential sculptors of the 20th century. His nonrepresentational sculptures in marble or metal concentrate on two basic themes: variations of the egg shape and soaring bird motifs. In *Conversations with Stoppard*, Stoppard says: "We're constantly squabbling and laughing about Brancusi. In 22 performances I think there's been only a few people who know that Brancusi is a sculptor. It makes…me laugh every time Flora says, 'Ah, Brancusi,' and the Rajah, thinking it's a car, says, 'You know them all Miss Crewe.' Dead silence. But two nights ago there were two guys sitting just behind us who got everything. 'Oh yes, a Brancusi.' 'You know them all, Miss Crewe.' They went, ha-ha! Just two people in the entire theatre. Get their names! It hasn't happened again. You end up with two plays.…It doesn't matter if everybody doesn't get everything."

Fictional Flora and Literary Life in 1920s London

Flora's Brush with Theater

> *It was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree who, soon after the Crewe family arrived in London from Derbyshire, gave FC her first employment, fleetingly as a cockney bystander in the original production of* Pygmalion, *and, after objections from Mrs. Patrick Campbell, more permanently "in the office." It was this connection which brought FC into the orbit of Tree's daughter Iris and her friend Nancy Cunard, and thence to the Sitwells, and arguably to the writing of poetry.*
>
> —Eldon Pike, *Indian Ink*

The famous actor-manager Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree (1853–1917) ran London's Haymarket Theatre for ten years before taking over management of Her Majesty's Theatre in 1897. Tree's production of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* in 1914 at Her Majesty's Theatre was one of the most successful theatrical productions of a new play on the London stage in the early decades of this century. The production starred the inimitable Mrs. Patrick Campbell (1865–1940) as Eliza Doolittle. Shaw had become infatuated with Stella Campbell after her success in Pinero's *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* in 1892 and wrote the role of Eliza Doolittle for her.

The aristocratic Sitwell family included the poets Edith (1887–1964) and Osbert (1892–1969) and their brother, the critic and essayist Sacheverell (1897–1988). Two of Tree's three daughters, Violet and Iris, were active in Edith Sitwell's circle of artistic friends and in the journal *Wheels*, the periodical with which Edith made her mark as editor and poet. Poet Nancy Cunard was a close friend of Edith in the early twenties.

Orbiting the Sitwells

The Sitwell circle, prominent in the 1920s and 1930s, provided an alternative to the famed Bloomsbury group in matters of taste in literature, art, and music. In her innovative poetry, Edith Sitwell experimented with imagery and rhythm in an effort to achieve the effects of music in verse. In 1916, Edith founded the literary journal *Wheels*, the contributors to which actively protested the rigidity of conservative society and the romanticism of the Georgian poets. *Wheels* published the work of many writers who later became quite famous, including Wilfred Owen, Aldous Huxley, T. S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf.

The Sitwells and their circle experimented with art and form. Edith herself was painted and photographed in various poses, including traditional death poses. The poetry of the Sitwells initially shocked readers, and for much of their careers they were attacked by those they called "the philistines." The *New Statesman*—the editor of which (J. C. Squire) accuses Flora Crewe of "posing as a poet" in *Indian Ink*—gave *Wheels* very bad reviews. The Sitwells, however, were known for their vigorous counterattacks.

The Bloomsbury Group

> *Now, Mr. Coomaraswami, turning a phrase may do for Bloomsbury, but I expect better of you.*
>
> —Flora Crewe, *Indian Ink*

The Bloomsbury group—a circle of literary, artistic, and intellectual friends who met at homes in and around the Bloomsbury district of London between 1907 and 1930—was perhaps the most renowned London literary association during the early part of the century. At the heart of the group were the sisters Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf. The group also included their husbands, art critic Clive Bell and journalist and political essayist Leonard Woolf, as well as the novelist E. M. Forster, artist and critic Roger Fry, economist John Maynard Keynes, poet Victoria Sackeville-West, and biographer Lytton Strachey. Members discussed aesthetic and philosophical questions in a spirit of agnosticism and were strongly influenced by A. N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell. They held in common a belief in the paramount importance of personal relationships, good taste, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Gertrude Stein and the rue de Fleurus

> *Oh…yes, Gertrude Stein!—and I can't bring myself to say she's a poisonous old baggage who's travelling on a platform ticket…"*
>
> —Flora Crewe

> *FC went to tea with Gertrude Stein and her companion Alice B. Toklas in Paris in 1922. The legend that Stein threw her out of the apartment because FC asked for the recipe of Miss Toklas's chocolate cake cannot be trusted. FC did not like chocolate in any form.*
>
> —Eldon Pike

The Sitwell circle was known to visit Stein's celebrated salon in the rue de Fleurus, along with such well-known figures as Pablo Picasso and Ernest Hemingway; Edith Sitwell considered Stein quite a genius and arranged for her to lecture at Oxford. It seems, however, that Flora Crewe concurs with the assessment of Virginia Woolf, who wrote to Roger Fry in 1925:

> *We are lying crushed under a manuscript of Gertrude Stein's. I cannot brisk myself up to deal with it—whether her contortions are genuine and fruitful, or only such spasms as we might all go through in sheer impatience at having to deal with English prose. Edith Sitwell says she's gigantic (meaning not the flesh but the spirit). For my own part I wish we could skip a generation.*

In 1933, Stein published her best-selling *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, which chronicled their life together in the rue de Fleurus. Taking on the narrative voice of her longtime companion, Stein wrote that she had known only three geniuses in her life: Picasso, Alfred North Whitehead…and Gertrude Stein.

An Interview with Carey Perloff on *Indian Ink*

by Elizabeth Brodersen

(January 4, 1999)

EB: *Why don't we start with a little bit of background. How did your relationship with Stoppard develop? Was it because you called him about* Arcadia*?*

CP: Yes. I think at some point I wrote him via his agent and said how thrilled I was to be doing *Arcadia* [in 1995]. We got to the end of the first week of rehearsal, and there were two things that we absolutely couldn't make any sense of. Graham Beckel said to me, "Well, he's a living playwright, for god's sake, talk to him!" So I faxed [Stoppard], never thinking I would hear from him, and he faxed back immediately the most hilarious, crazy comments. These "sorry, it is a sexual reference, I know it's not very funny" kind of comments. So we started a correspondence. Then I think right after I finished *Arcadia* I was going to be in London and I rang up his assistant and said that I would love to meet with him. *Indian Ink* was on in London right before I got there and had finished by the time I arrived, but I had read all about it and had read the script. So we met and had a wonderful time.

I saw him again, not this past summer, but the summer before that I spent a month in England. It was that terrible summer when it was 100 degrees, and you know there is no air conditioning in England. It was horrible. He picked me up in his air-conditioned black BMW, and it was the only time I was cool on the whole trip. He asked me where I wanted to go, and I said, "Let's just drive around." We ended up going to the Old Vic bar. I remember sitting at the bar at the Old Vic and talking about *Indian Ink* and other plays and American theater and which writers we were excited about and what was going on. He was just working on *The Invention of Love*.

Then I saw him again when I was with [playwright] Timberlake [Wertenbaker]. I remember I had a meeting with him at the National [Theatre], and he was really wrestling with *The Invention of Love*. I had read Catullus, all that Latin love poetry, as an undergraduate. So we talked about translations of Latin and laughed. We had a great time and he sent me off to read a pile of Housman. Then, last Christmas, when I finally knew we could get the rights to *Indian Ink*, I had this long meeting with Art Malik. We went to the Palm Court at the Waldorf Astoria. (I thought that would be the right setting for this!) Then Art and I and [my husband] Anthony went to see *The Invention of Love*, and we all met afterwards with Stoppard so I could get Art excited about Stoppard's work again and see if I could kickstart the A.C.T. production. And that began that whole unbelievable journey of trying to get Equity's permission to let Art appear in this production. He right away rang and said yes, he would love to do it, and then it took a year to get permission.

EB: *What kinds of things did you learn directing* Arcadia *that you will be applying to directing* Indian Ink*?*

CP: Susan Gibney [who will play Flora Crewe] just called me in a panic and said, "Oh my God, there is so much research!" The beginning of rehearsing any Stoppard play is a process of unraveling the surface of the play; you just try to get your hands on all these multiple threads he weaves together. Right now, for example, I am trying to figure out who Flora is as a poet. So this weekend I started out reading Edith Sitwell, and all the poets Stoppard refers to in the script. But Flora's poetry doesn't feel like Edith Sitwell, who is much more arty and a little more precious. So then I started reading H.D. [Hilda Dolittle], and her work is really the closest. In fact I copied into the back of this volume a poem by H.D. called "Heat" [Carey reads poem]. She wrote it in 1916, so that is right before Flora's time.

EB: It sounds a lot like the poem Stoppard has Flora write in the play.

CP: It does sound like her. I've looked at a lot of women poets of that period. And I have looked at loads of Indian art and read a lot of Indian poetry, that kind of thing. Anyway, working on *Indian Ink* is really about trying to get beyond the intimidation of the complexity of the political situation in India in 1930, to understand what was happening in the Raj, and who these people were—trying to track the first layer of the text. Eventually, as with *Arcadia*, you realize that underneath that dazzling surface Stoppard's work keeps coming back to a few very simple and powerful questions, like the question Queen Elizabeth asks in *Shakespeare in Love* [the screenplay cowritten by Stoppard]: Is it possible to write something true about love? That is a huge question for a writer like Stoppard, who is so enthralled by the possibilities of the English language and, at the same time, like [Harold] Pinter, so suspicious of the ability of language to convey something that isn't clichéd, but that is emotionally true. That is also the question the playwright character asks in *The Real Thing*, when he falls in love and wants to write his lover a play, but he can't do it because everything he writes sounds so banal. This is something that Stoppard has wrestled with in all of his work. *Indian Ink* is I think a play about what it means to develop a relationship that is very intimate and complex across a cultural barrier…and about being painted. I just asked Susan if she had ever been painted, which I haven't. I hate to be photographed, so I can't imagine going through it.

EB: Has she been painted?

CP: No, but her uncle, who is now blind, is an artist and wanted to paint her for many years. She rang him when she knew she was going to do this play and said, "Oh, now you will never be able to paint me." But they talked about it, because in order to be rendered truthfully, the subject has to leave herself open to the artist. A big part of the relationship between Flora and Nirad seems to be that he can feel when she is withholding, and he can feel when she is open to him. That is a very profound thing between two people and has nothing to do with language. A relationship develops between them that is extremely nuanced and detailed and personal—which is why that terrible breakdown happens between them, when she finally looks at the painting and doesn't speak to him about it. He feels that their artistic relationship is an expression of his personal feelings for her, which she has rejected by rejecting his painting of her. She, on the other hand, feels quite the

opposite. *Indian Ink* is a play about cultural misunderstanding, but also about inevitable romantic misunderstanding, how hard it is to be with someone, to forge a relationship with someone that feels true.

EB: Yet Flora does seem to understand him, because it's only after the breakdown that she provokes him into painting a work that is actually true to his spirit.

CP: That's right. And one of the things she seems to understand is that in order to love someone you have to do something for yourself; Nirad has to create a work of art that *he* loves, not something he has created just to please her. So, in a way, this play follows *Arcadia*, which is also about a kind of falling in love through the commingling of art or of ideas. In *Arcadia*, Septimus and Thomasina fall in love through the beauty of mathematics. I think Stoppard really believes in the eroticism of ideas and of art.

EB: I've noticed in the last several things he's written that he seems to be fascinated with the effect of desire on the creative process.

CP: Yes. And the effect of the creative process on desire. Again, this theme is central to *Shakespeare in Love*: It's not just that Shakespeare is cute that attracts Viola. It's that he has created a kind of language that fuels her such that, even when she's making love to him outside rehearsals of the play he's writing for her, you can't tell sometimes when she is quoting his lines and when she is speaking in her own voice, because the language that she borrows of theatrical desire becomes the language of her own desire, as art always imitates life and life always imitates art.

EB: And Shakespeare [in the film] isn't able to write at all without being in love with someone who inspires him to create that language.

CP: Once you have done some work on Stoppard you begin to trust that beneath the surface, which is so complex and rich, is something which is actually very profound and very simple, which if you can get to it will allow people who don't know the details of the surface landscape a way in.

EB: Are there specific things that you do to help the cast get to that point?

CP: Well, you know I'm a research nut, so I give people loads of material. And I think one thing I know how to do is to make language hot. Appreciating Stoppard's writing isn't really an intellectual experience. It is about appreciating the eroticism of a really good idea. If you really believe in that, and you allow that kind of heat to happen between the actors, then the rest of it falls into place.

Of course, *Indian Ink* is also very ambiguous. There are three men with whom Flora could have slept and been involved with in this play: it may have been all three of them and it may have been none of them, literally. Desire is in some ways more interesting than consummation, and I don't think Stoppard wants us to know the answer. So…I do many things in rehearsal just to play with that question, a lot of improvisation, and a lot of reading of poetry and a lot of looking at visual material. You know, you figure out actor to actor what it is that unlocks them. It is different with everybody.

EB: *I asked Stoppard whether or not his discovery of* rasa *had affected his work since he wrote* Indian Ink*, and he said, "Well, I can't say that I've become* rasa*-conscious." I did find it interesting that the concept of* rasa *seems to have developed first with respect to theater, and I was wondering if your awareness of the concept has affected your approach to things.*

CP: Well, everybody translates the term slightly differently. Barbara Stoler Miller translates it as "juice" or "flavor." I don't know if I would use that word, but when Flora asks, "Does a poem have *rasa*?" Nirad says, "*Rasa* is the soul of the sentence and the sentence is the soul of the poem," or something like that, and that *rasa* is the effect that the work of art has on the person viewing it. *Rasa* is like the sensation of taste, in that it describes not just what is held within the work of art, but it also encompasses the essence of the work of art that is communicated to the person experiencing it. When you try to shape a piece of theater, that kind of "juice," that literal sense of how the work sits in people's mouths, what the taste of it will be overall, is very important.

EB: *One thing that I found fascinating, and which Stoppard talked about too, is that the experience of* rasa *requires both parties. It requires the observer of the art and what he or she brings to it, and the state that he or she is in, as well as the art and the artist.*

CP: Yes, the two coexist. Art doesn't exist in a vacuum; art is always about being received. It is also about consummation and union, which is why the image is sexual. Art Malik says that *rasa* between two actors is when there is juice that is unspoken, when two people's eyes meet in a way that makes every performance alive, every performance different, and the audience actually experiences real life being lived instead of something being replicated onstage. It also has to do with how bold you are willing to be. The design for this production, for example, is really intense, with unbelievably saturated Indian colors like cobalt blue and saffron and orange, and beautiful filigree screens you can see through. There's a huge red hotel wall with neon. I just said to [scenic designer] Loy Arcenas, "We might as well really go there." It will either be overwhelming or it will be incredibly beautiful. This is a very difficult play to design because it is very fluid and very filmic and you don't want it to be too literal. Yet it is about two very particular cultures, so you can't just abstract the whole thing; it is about being English in India and being Indian in England, and you have to know where you are moment to moment. The sound will tell us a great deal. And the costumes will tell us a great deal. We tried to make it very fluid.

EB: *Well, originally they did it all with sound in the radio play.*

CP: Yes. This structurally is so much more interesting than the radio play, which I just listened to again recently. He breaks the rules so much more in the stage version. In the radio play you have a scene in England, then a scene in India. The thing I set out to do in designing this production was to see if we could achieve something like the last act of *Arcadia*, which was the most fun I've ever had directing, where the 19th and 20th centuries coexisted in the same room, with

characters from both centuries using the same props on the same table. It had to be so clear to the audience that nobody would be confused, and yet it was so magical, and you could only do that in the theater. I wanted to see if we could pull that off, so when Flora [in India in 1930] is wandering around describing the bungalow, she can stand right behind Eleanor [in London in the 1980s], while she is reading Flora's letter describing the bungalow. Then Eleanor can wander off and Flora can sit right at the same table. So we are going to try to make it very, very fluid and see if we can still track the story. We have this endless storyboard, pages and pages. It's like doing a movie.

EB: *Is there anything you want to point out to American audiences seeing this play? Stoppard didn't have too much to say about it, just that he hoped there was…*

CP: Well, his initial worry was, "Do you think it is universal enough?" It is hard for me to say. I am never the most objective person, and in certain ways I know England certainly better than most Americans, and I have spent a lot of time studying the Raj, but I don't think that one would need to to understand this play. The more I work on the play, the more things emerge which I think will be of great interest to people.

You know, we have this odd belief in America. We are obsessed with *People* magazine and biography and finding out the facts of people's personal lives. What we don't realize is that biography is just another work of fiction. You ask certain questions, and therefore you get certain answers. If you asked different questions, you would get different answers. I remember with the Anne Sexton biography, everyone thought that using her therapy tapes was a terrible violation of the rules of biography.

One of the things *Indian Ink* plays with is our desire to get inside the heartbeat of artists who interest us, to find out about their lives; it's also about how impossible that is, that maybe that isn't the way to try to read art. I think anybody who has ever been interested in celebrity will find this play very interesting. Flora's entire reputation, for example, rests on her snide answer to the question, "Why is everything in your poems about sex?" She says, "Just for the fun of it. Write what you know." And that haunts her for the rest of her life, even though she says at the time she made that comment she was a virgin. Well, a biographer would pick that up and get it all wrong. Like Pike believing Eleanor when she says that Flora didn't like chocolate of any kind. The most offhand comments become doctrine. I think that is something that will really speak to Americans and that is part of what makes the play really fun.

That is another thing I've learned directing Stoppard, which is a great pleasure. He allows the audience to be part of the creative process, because we are constantly engaged in the creation of the biography, trying to match what we've seen with what's been said, and trying to figure out whether it adds up. These are not plays one can watch passively. They are like watching thrillers. I think Stoppard is a generous playwright that way. He demands a lot, but I think he is also extremely willing to let the audience in and to allow the audience this wonderful experience of creative discovery. That is why people like seeing his plays again and again, which I think is very unusual. The story is not finished for you when the curtain comes down, so there is an openendedness in which you have to participate.

EB: *Are there any changes in the script that you'd like to see him make?*

CP: I've cut little things. I took out certain references that I didn't want to use scenically, like the couch, that kind of thing.

EB: *Anything that would make it more understandable to an American audience?*

CP: No. All you really have to do is treat the play like a thriller and pick up the clues. So you have to listen for things like the mention of Sasha: Pike never gets it, and calls it a "reference obscure"; later you realize who Sasha was. You just have to stay with it, but this is a very accessible play.

EB: *This show has a fairly large cast, with 17 actors, at least 5 of whom are Indian. I know finding the right Indian actors has been an arduous process.*

CP: The process of casting this production is a saga in itself. We did a complicated Web search of every Indian publication we could find, of Indian organizations and community-based groups in the Bay Area and all over the country. We did open calls in Los Angeles, in New York, and San Francisco, and we got the word out in Chicago and Seattle. I saw every Indian film we could get our hands on. I met with a casting person in London, and we had an American casting director, Judy Dennis, working with us, who went to the nontraditional casting office in New York, worked through Actors' Equity, and even put notices up in Indian restaurants. We wrote to every training program. It was quite a quest.

EB: *Why did we spread the net so wide?*

CP: Because these are very difficult roles. You need classically trained actors of real emotional range, with very strong language skills, who can fill the Geary Theater. That is a very tall order, especially when you are looking for actors of such specific ethnicity. Even in England, where there is a huge Anglo-Indian population, they had a hard time casting this play.

I auditioned at least a hundred Indian actors, and each one of them had a story about how this play related to his life. I think the question in this play of what it means to be Indian living in America or England today is very moving. For example, in the beginning of the play, Anish doesn't really feel Indian at all. He has married an English girl and he thinks of himself as an English painter, and part of the journey of the play for him, ironically, is the discovery of his own Indianness as he finally begins to understand his father. That is an issue to which every second-generation immigrant can relate.

And we have our beloved Jean Stapleton and Susan Gibney back, and a brilliant newcomer David Conrad, and our good friend Kathryn Crosby. I tried to cast actors who generate a lot of heat, so the temptation for the audience to go in a cerebral direction will not be there.

If we do it well, you should enter into a very magical world and be transported by this play. Perhaps you will even experience *rasa*!

Study Questions

1. Think about the two time periods in which *Indian Ink* is set. How do the characters, setting, lights, music, sound, and costumes show the shifts in time? Are some shifts more difficult to understand than others? Why? How does what happens in one period affect the other period? How is the modern India Eldon Pike visits different from the India in which Flora lived? How is it the same? Who are the most significant characters in each time period? How is Flora Crewe viewed by the characters of each time period?

2. How are Flora Crewe and Nirad Das viewed as individuals, and as artists, by members of their own cultures? How is each of them viewed by members of the other's culture? How are they different from the stereotypical English woman and Indian man of their time? What are the barriers to their friendship? How and why do they come together? Why do you think Stoppard was inspired to write about the relationship between a poet being painted while writing about the experience of being painted?

3. What does Flora mean when she asks Nirad not to be so British? How does he feel about that question? How does he finally show his "Indian" self to Flora? Why does he end up in jail right after Flora leaves Jummapur?

4. Eldon Pike exclaims over his footnotes to Flora's letters: "The notes, the notes! The notes is where the fun is!" What does he mean by that? Do you agree with him? What is Pike missing in his quest to understand Flora and her work? What do you think Stoppard is saying about biography and biographers?

5. What does Pike's search for a nude watercolor of Flora symbolize? Does he ever find it? Why or why not?

6. Although Eleanor is not related to Anish Das, she says that he is "family." Why is the bond between them so strong? What do they have in common?

7. What does Anish learn about his father in the course of the play? How does he learn it? How does that lesson affect him?

8. Flora compares herself to Radha, "the most beautiful of the herdswomen." How are she and Radha similar? How does the story of Radha and Krishna parallel the story of Flora and Nirad? With whom do you believe Flora had an affair in Jummapur, and how do you support your conclusion?

9. How and why do the characters in *Indian Ink* experience *rasa*? How do the actors and the audience experience *rasa* in this production? How do the setting, lights, and costumes contribute to that experience?

Things to Think About:
Quotes from *Indian Ink*

Now, Eldon, you are *not* allowed to write a book, not if you were to eat the entire cake. The *Collected Poems* was a lovely surprise and I'm sure the *Collected Letters* will be splendid, but *biography* is the worst possible excuse for getting people wrong.

—Mrs. Eleanor Swan

The painting under one's hand is everything, of course…unique. But replication! *That* is popularity!

—Anish Das

Political opinions are often, and perhaps entirely, a function of temperament, Mr. Das.

—Flora Crewe

If you don't start learning to *take* you'll never be shot of us. *Who whom*. Nothing else counts.

—Flora Crewe

Only in art can empires cheat oblivion, because only the artist can say: Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!

—Nirad Das

Independence would be the beginning of the end for the Princely States. Though in a sense you are right, too—Independence will be the end of the unity of the Subcontinent.

—The Rajah of Jummapur

Report what you like. I don't mind, you see. *You* mind. But I don't. I have never minded.

—Flora Crewe (to David Durance)

The natives. Ask them. We've pulled this country together. It's taken a couple of hundred years with a hiccup or two but the place now works.

—David Durance

For Further Reading…

On and by Tom Stoppard

Delaney, Paul, ed. *Tom Stoppard in Conversation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Gussow, Mel. *Conversations with Stoppard*. New York: Grove Press, 1996.

Hayman, Ronald. *Tom Stoppard*. London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1980.

Jenkins, Anthony, ed. *Critical Essays on Tom Stoppard*. London: G. K. Hall, 1990.

Stoppard, Tom. *Indian Ink*. London: Faber and Faber, 1995.

_____. *In the Native State*. London: Faber and Faber, 1991.

_____. *The Invention of Love*. New York: Grove Press, 1997.

On India, England, and the Raj

Allen, Charles, ed. *Plain Tales from the Raj*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975.

Anant, Victor, ed. *India: A Celebration of Independence 1947–97.* New York: Aperture, 1997.

Baldizzone, Tiziana and Gianni. *Timeless India*. New Jersey: Grantha Corporation, 1997.

Bradley, John, ed. *Lady Curzon's India*. New York: Beaufort Books, 1985.

Campbell-Johnson, Alan. *Mission with Mountbatten*. New York: Dutton, 1953.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda. *The Dance of Shiva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture*. New York: Dover Publications, 1985.

Danielou, Alain. *The Myths and Gods of India*. Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1991.

Dehejia, Vidya. *Indian Art*. London: Phaidon Press, 1997.

Eden, Emily. *Up the Country*. London: Oxford University Press, 1930.

Flood, Gavin. *An Introduction to Hinduism*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Forster, E. M. *A Passage to India*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1984.

Guest, Barbara. *Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. and Her World*. New York: Quill, 1984.

Knappert, Jan. *Indian Mythology*. London: Diamond Books, 1995.

The Last Empire: Photography in British India, 1855–1911. New York: Aperture, Inc., 1976.

Lehmann, John. *A Nest of Tigers: The Sitwells in Their Times*. Boston: Little Brown, 1968.

MacMillan, Margaret. *Women of the Raj*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988.

Masani, Zareer. *Indian Tales of the Raj*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Menta, Gita. *Snakes and Ladders: Glimpses of Modern India*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Metcalf, Thomas R. *Ideologies of the Raj*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Miller, Barbara Stoler, trans. *Love Song of the Dark Lord, Jayadeva's Gitagovinda*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Mookerjee, Ajit. *Ritual Art of India*. Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1998.

Moore, Derry. *Evening Ragas*. London: John Murray, 1997.

Paz, Octavio. *In Light of India*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Salter, Elizabeth. *Edith Sitwell*. London: Oresko Books, 1979.

Scott, Paul. *The Raj Quartet*: *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966), *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), *The Towers of Silence* (1971), *A Division of the Spoils* (1975). Chicago: University of Chicago Press (repr. 1998).

Tully, Mark. *The Heart of India*. New York: Penguin USA, 1997.

Wolpert, Stanley. *India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Yule, Henry, et al. *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases*. Missouri: South Asia Books (repr. 1986).