



## ANIMAL, VEGETABLE OR MINERAL? OBJECTS IN TOM STOPPARD'S *ARCADIA*

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The simplicity of the single set in *Arcadia*<sup>1</sup> with its rather austere furniture, bare floor and uncurtained windows has been pointed out by critics, notably in comparison with some of Stoppard's earlier work. This relatively timeless set provides, on one level, an unchanging backdrop for the play's multiple complexities in terms of plot, ideas and temporal structure. However we should not conclude that the set plays a secondary role in the play since the mysteries at the centre of the plot can only be solved here and with this particular group of characters. Furthermore, I would like to suggest that the on-stage objects play a similarly vital role by gradually transforming our first impressions and contributing to the multi-layered meaning of the play. In his study on the theatre from a phenomenological perspective, Bert O. States writes: "Theater is the medium, par excellence, that consumes the real in its realest forms [...] Its permanent spectacle is the parade of objects and processes in transit from environment to imagery" [STATES 1985 : 40]. This paper will look at some of the parading or paraded objects in *Arcadia*. The objects are many and various, as can be seen in the list provided in the Samuel French acting edition (along with lists of lighting and sound effects). We will see that there are not only many different objects, but also that each object can be called upon to assume different functions at different moments, hence the rather playful question in the title of this paper (an allusion to the popular game "Twenty Questions" in which the identity of an object has to be guessed), suggesting we consider the objects as a kind of challenge to the spectator, who is set the task of identifying and interpreting them. For reasons of time and space, I will not attempt to deal with all the objects in the play, but will focus on those I consider to have more than the simple function of creating the spatial and temporal context of the action.

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations from the play will be taken from the 2009 Faber edition.

Marvin Carlson has discussed how iconic objects on stage are “carefully selected or created to approximate such objects in the world outside the theatre as closely as possible” [CARLSON 1990 : 76]. This is obviously the case here, since all the objects I will mention correspond to what he calls “iconic identity”, a term coined by Keir Elam, in that “objects are the things they represent” [ELAM 1980 : 76]. However, as Bert O. States reminds us, even in the case of the most ordinary object: “theater balances the tension between the pressing real world and its own ritual” [STATES 1985 : 42].

Because it allows the possibility of creating the illusion of the fourth wall, we tend to think that it is the room which plays the major role in setting up iconic space. This is not strictly speaking true, for stage space is more complex than that. Kenneth Pickering points out that:

There is a distinction between the walls of that room, which we know not to be made of plaster, and the furniture, which is as real as any in our own home. In some ways, the effect of placing a natural object in an artificial environment is to sharpen the audience’s awareness of the importance and function of that object. [PICKERING 2010 : 188]

I would argue that this is particularly true in *Arcadia*. From the outset, virtually all the objects of importance in *Arcadia* are placed on the large table which occupies a central position on the stage. Both the size and position of the table are significant since it attracts the audience’s attention and makes the objects more noticeable. It is probably the books which first catch our eye. If we cannot, of course, see which particular books are being studied, we can at least identify them as books, magazines, portfolios, papers etc. of varying shapes and sizes. At first these documents seem simply designed to inform the audience that this is a school room with its occupants engaged in appropriate activities. The play starts off with a picture of quiet study and this short sequence of studious silence will be repeated at intervals throughout the play with the same characters, for example at the beginning of scene 3 [STOPPARD 2009 : 48], or with other characters, for example sequences involving Hannah and Valentine [104, 107].

In the early stages of the play, a certain order is to be seen on the table with “his and her” documents. On the one hand, there are those relating to Thomasina’s education in the portfolio (there will later be 3 items assembled in this portfolio: the mathematics primer, the lesson book and the diagram). On the other hand, there are those relating to Septimus’s involvement in the affairs of the Chaters: the copy of “The Couch of Eros” (later to contain the 3 letters). The description of these documents is quite precise in the stage

directions (size, quality, tapes etc.) since the audience will have to identify them when they reappear later on: “In front of Valentine is Septimus’s portfolio, recognizably so but naturally somewhat jaded” [58]. This use of objects which relies on the audience’s ability to identify the rightful owner also operates in Stoppard’s 1974 play *Travesties* [STOPPARD 1974 : 19] where Lenin’s folder gets mixed up with Joyce’s. So far the objects are behaving as we might expect: helping to create time and space, being specifically associated with certain characters in order that the first plot (the identity of the addressee of the three letters in “The Couch of Eros”) can function properly. I will not dwell on the whodunit element involved here, suffice it to say that this first plot uses the books, letters etc. in a fairly conventional way. (Aloyssia Rousseau discusses this most convincingly in her study of the play.) We can notice that the three letters in the volume come to light in strictly chronological order and that, as the spectators see them delivered, they are never in any doubt as to who sent them and to whom. This means that the spectators are always at least one step ahead of the contemporary characters as far as the duel episode is concerned.

This is not true in the case of the documents relating to Thomasina’s intellectual development. Like Septimus’s book and letters, these objects are also passed back and forth from one character to another across the centuries, raising the question of ownership, for example, as in the case of “The Couch of Eros”, which Bernard presumes Byron had borrowed from Septimus before the letters were placed in it [STOPPARD 2009 : 76]. The mathematics primer, used by Thomasina in the 1809 scenes actually belongs to Septimus. Thomasina expresses her surprise in scene 7 that Septimus still has her “old primer” [126]. In other words, Septimus’s portfolio contains items belonging to different periods and of different types. More importantly, this object disrupts the chronology of the play in several ways, in a play in which the question of ordering events is constantly brought to the fore. Whereas the letters in “The Couch of Eros” all belong to the same short period of time, this is not the case for the three items in the portfolio. The primer we have seen belongs to the early period when Thomasina is 13, the lesson book is used both in 1809 and 1812. Although we do not know in detail what she has written in them, we know of their existence from the start. As for the diagram with its equations, this is an altogether different affair. We see Hannah and Valentine looking at this diagram and commenting on it in scene 4 [58] long before we actually witness Thomasina doing the diagram. The stage directions on page 116 highlight the temporal disruption since we read: “She settles down to drawing the diagram which is to be the third item in the surviving portfolio”. We are left in the dark about what this diagram means until the end of the play when Valentine

suddenly announces: "It's a diagram of heat exchange" [127]. Put in another way, we are placed in the same situation as Hannah and Valentine, trying to discover its meaning instead of being in the comfortable position of superiority we enjoyed during "The Couch of Eros" letters episode. A frequently repeated remark in the play is: "I don't know. I wasn't there" [see 66, 77, 78], but being there is not really enough either, since we have to be able to understand what we are witnessing. What the play suggests is the necessity of collaboration in order to understand. Hence we watch both Hannah and Septimus pouring over Thomasina's lesson book [105] and both Septimus and Valentine studying her last diagram: "Septimus and Valentine study the diagram doubled by time" [127]. The doubling of these items described at the beginning of scene 2 in the stage directions, is not just Stoppard playing games with his audience, it also serves to illustrate a number of other points. The doubling of the objects makes visible, of course, the doubling of the time periods and groups of characters, but it also illustrates the notion of iteration which is fundamental to the scientific theories under discussion. In other words, the objects looked at separately may lead to misinterpretation, but the objects if combined with study and discussion finally give up their secrets. The characters struggling to make sense of the various documents mirror the audience's position too.

As the play proceeds, the table gathers more and more objects, not just papers, although written documents constitute the bulk of what we see there. Almost every time a character comes on stage s/he brings in more documents, letters or books to the extent that it becomes necessary to rummage around to find things. By the second scene the tortoise is half-hidden [26]. In scene 7 Valentine "roots about in what is now a considerable mess of papers, books and objects" to lay his hands on Thomasina's diagram [127]. It is hard not to see in this accumulation of objects: "the geometrical solids, the computer, decanter, glasses, tea mug, Hannah's research books, Septimus's books, the two portfolios, Thomasina's candlestick, the oil lamp, the dahlia, Sunday papers ..." [131], a visual representation of the search for knowledge, the difficulty of understanding the past, or simply knowledge itself. There is an abundance of information but the difficulty lies in interpreting it. We have come some distance from seeing the objects merely as the means to create the illusion of reality. These objects never seem to blend in with the background, they constantly attract our attention.

If the jumble on the table may be read metaphorically, we could say the same for the large wicker laundry hamper full of Regency clothes. These clothes serve to further blur the temporal boundaries between past and present at the end of the play when, contrary to what happens in the first half, costume is no longer used to indicate time. Beyond the impression

created that the contemporary characters are being drawn back into the past by these clothes (is iteration at work again?) or at least that they have to immerse themselves in this past in order to make some sense of it, the actual description of the action surrounding the laundry hamper suggests another possibility. Chloe is described “digging into the basket and producing odd garments for Bernard” [123]. This seems to produce on stage the equivalent of the excavation process which is going on in the garden which has also brought to light relics of the past. Valentine explains to Hannah how his brother Gus managed to find immediately “the foundations of Capability Brown’s boat-house” while the experts had been digging for months [65]. Unless of course we choose to see the dressing up in Regency clothes as a variation on the Red Book theme, the before and after transformations of the park through the centuries.

We can also compare the difficulties involved in putting past events in order and trying to read order into the evolution of the English garden. The play contains several contradictory versions of this story too. Although we never actually see the garden, we are nevertheless aware of it, at least as another narrative (compare Lady Croom’s account [18-19], with that of Hannah [39]). The vegetable world however has not been completely relegated to the off-stage area since we are shown two objects which fit into this category: the apple and the dahlia. The second item belongs to the Bernard plot and its role in Bernard’s misunderstanding of past events is made explicit. We are told that Ezra Chater discovered a dahlia in Martinique in the second scene of the play [31]. There follows a series of references to the dahlia. Lady Croom comments on Chater’s botanical mission in the West Indies [97], the stage directions indicate its presence at the beginning of scene 7 [99]. The most striking use of the pot of dahlias comes on page 113 where Lady Croom touches them as she tells Septimus how she came to have dahlias in her garden while Hannah, we realize, is reading precisely the extract in the garden book which explains all this some two hundred years later. The audience for a moment is witnessing the intersection of past and present, telling and showing. We have the impression— it is an illusion of course—that we can actually see the text Hannah is reading because we can hear Lady Croom’s words. It seems particularly fitting that Bernard, placing his faith in the male seducer and male violence (the duel), should be brought down by a dahlia called Charity (a victory for the female seductress).

Reversal is also at work in the case of the apple. Several scholars have pointed out the parallels between Sidley Park and the Garden of Eden. Both Hannah and Lady Croom describe the garden as a kind of “paradise”, but they are speaking about two very different stages in the evolution of Sidley

Park. The word “serpentine” is used first by Lady Croom to describe the garden before Noakes sets to work on it [19] and then by Hannah [36]. For Lady Croom the word has positive connotations, but not for Hannah. Septimus refers to Noakes as the serpent “in the scheme of the garden” [8]. However, it is the young (and innocent?) Gus who offers Hannah the apple and the same Gus who finally offers her the drawing that constitutes the proof that the hermit is Septimus. The apple is passed around (even the tortoise gets its share!) crossing the time gap from present into past. Of course, the choice of the apple provides a timely reminder of Newton’s work on the law of gravity, said to have been inspired by the fall of an apple. This leads to a discussion between Valentine and Chloe on the multiple meanings of the word “attraction”: “The attraction that Newton left out. All the way back to the apple in the garden” [100]. The apple has therefore obvious symbolic meanings in the play.

However, in *Arcadia* the apple is not restricted to conventional symbolic meanings. It is also used in another way, directly and indirectly contrasted with more complex forms. As a sphere the apple is like one of the simple geometrical shapes that Thomasina (and Augustus unwillingly) is set to study and draw [105]. The opposition between geometrical shapes and natural forms is already present in scene 3 when Thomasina expresses the desire to find a more complex equation to represent the more complex forms in nature: “If there is an equation for a curve like a bell, there must be an equation for one like a bluebell, and if a bluebell, why not a rose?” [51]. Before attempting to find the equation for a rose, Thomasina turns to something more simple: the leaf attached to the apple. The enterprise is obviously difficult, since three years later she announces to her mother:

Mountains are not pyramids and trees are not cones. God must love gunnery and architecture if Euclid is his only geometry. There is another geometry which I am engaged in discovering by trial and error, am I not, Septimus? [114]

It is these attempts which Valentine finds in Thomasina’s lesson book and which he finally converts into computer images [103].

Both the dahlia and the apple contribute to Stoppard’s efforts not only to give a concrete form to the scientific and aesthetic ideas under discussion, but also to make visible to the spectators the peculiar interactions between past and present. As we have just seen, it is the silent character Gus who hands the apple to Hannah, suggesting that on stage, it is not just the words that count.

If the apple suggests an interesting link between the object (sphere) and the vegetable, the tortoise takes this one step further and crosses another boundary between the animate and the inanimate. The tortoise, too, could be seen as a shape or form. However, just as the apple can be interpreted in multiple ways, so too the tortoise can lead the spectator in many different directions. It should be said first that tortoises figure in other Stoppard plays, notably in the 1972 play *Jumpers* where the main character, George, is also given a pet tortoise called Pat. In *Arcadia*, Septimus has a pet tortoise called Plautus, while in the contemporary scenes it is Valentine who keeps one with the unlikely name of Lightning. Both tortoises are mentioned many times, both in the dialogue and stage directions, so the spectator is unlikely to forget their presence. Furthermore, the tortoise, like the apple, plays a role in both time periods although in both cases the contemporary one cannot be distinguished from its Regency counterpart, according to the stage directions [48, 58]. Both Septimus and Valentine feed their tortoises [49, 72], talk to them [9, 26] much to Bernard's obvious annoyance. The tortoise therefore makes a clear visual link between Septimus and Valentine, reinforcing their resemblance as teacher/scientist figures in association with Thomasina and Hannah. Just as it is an object, the dahlia, which proves Bernard wrong, it is an "object", the tortoise which proves Hannah's theory about the identity of the hermit to be correct. It is worth noting how, yet again, Stoppard gives us the impression we can see something distinctly on stage (the drawing that Thomasina does of Septimus with his tortoise) which in fact we cannot possibly see, by showing us the action of drawing. We see her drawing, hear her say what the drawing is and then think we can see the drawing itself. Thomasina announces she has done the drawing and gives it to Septimus [119] who later gives it to Augustus [120]. It is quite appropriate that it should be Augustus's silent double, Gus, who should hand the drawing on to Hannah. This drawing of Septimus with the tortoise might seem insignificant but it does serve two purposes. Firstly, since Bernard has found evidence that the hermit of Sidley Park kept a tortoise, the last piece of the puzzle concerning the identity of the hermit falls into place. Secondly, the drawing episode shows clearly how the play relies on a combination of verbal and visual clues.

The tortoise then plays a role in the plot, like the books we discussed earlier, and allows the visual elements of the play to be foregrounded. There is more to it, of course. After all, another object could have served the same purpose of associating Septimus with both the hermit and Valentine. To identify another reason behind the choice of the tortoise, we will return to *Jumpers*. As we have seen, the main character George, a philosopher, keeps a tortoise, Pat, but he also has a pet hare, who goes by the name of Thumper.

In the lecture he dictates to his secretary he announces his intention of exposing the fallacy of Zeno's paradoxes, according to which: "an arrow could never reach its target, and a tortoise given a head start in a race with, say, a hare, could never be overtaken" [21]. George then explains that he has brought a specially trained tortoise and a similarly trained hare for the purposes of the demonstration. The experiment goes horribly wrong and George ends up killing the hare with his bow and arrow and then crushing the tortoise to death by stepping on it [72]. Both incidents create suitably striking stage events. When we look at *Arcadia*, we will notice a surprising number of hares being alluded to and one dead one brought on stage in scene 6. In this play, the killing of hares and other creatures is not the result of accident, but part of "the calendar of slaughter" [21] which is recorded in the game books and which provide the data for Valentine's research. It is the shooting of a hare which provides Bernard with the proof that Byron was actually staying at Sidley Park at the time of the letters written by Chater although there is some disagreement as to whether it was Byron or Augustus who actually shot the creature [see 20, 74, 108]. The play uses the sound of guns to good effect. Most of the time, the sound evokes a shooting party, but when we hear a single shot at dawn at the end of scene 4, after the double duel has been announced in scene 3, we are not quite sure what to expect. However, scene 5, instead of taking us back to the earlier period which both the single shot and the pattern of alternating scenes lead us to expect, detaches the sound from its meaning. At this point we must remember that Byron's "rabbit pistols" have been entrusted to Septimus. He comes on stage at the beginning of scene 6, having obviously survived any duel and dramatically places the pistols on the table, of course. The mood changes abruptly when, after lyrically describing the beauty of the morning at dawn, he takes out of his coat a dead rabbit. The play sets up a difference between rabbits, which Thomasina apparently enjoys eating in pies, and hares, which are hunted for sport, although the difference is not all that apparent. This is also the case in *Jumpers* where George describes his hare as "like a rabbit with long legs" [48]. All the allusions to rabbits, apart from those connected with Byron's pistols, are connected to Thomasina who even compares her equations to a rabbit which "eats its own progeny" [105]. The "very rabbit-like" dead hare on the stage presents the audience with a visual picture of the off-stage shooting activity, taking away the glamour of both duels and shooting parties. The fact that the rabbit/hare is associated with food, sport and killing should not surprise us. The play constantly toys with such ambiguity—*Et in Arcadia ego*—and refuses to fit into an either/or approach. Chater is both poet and botanist [122], Noakes both painter and landscape gardener [36], and Walpole both novelist and gardener [20].



It is more than likely that we are expected to notice an opposition between the dead rabbit/hare and the tortoise which could be described as alive although not lively. In scene 1 we see Septimus pick up Plautus and move it a few inches “as though it had strayed” [9]. The powerful effects to be achieved on stage by blurring the frontier between the animate and the inanimate can be seen in the anecdote related by Ira Nadel in his biography of Stoppard about the original production of *Arcadia*:

The National received several letters from distracted playgoers saying that they couldn't appreciate the work because they feared that the tortoise [...] was going to tumble off the table. A cruelty-to-animals league threatened some form of action until it was revealed that Plautus was a radio-controlled imitation tortoise expertly built by the props department. [NADEL 2004 : 442]

Ultimately, it is hard to avoid the impression that Stoppard wishes us to see the two animals as a pair and therefore to link them to the fable of the tortoise and the hare. Although this is much less evident than in the earlier play, there are a number of hints which can be taken into consideration. It is tempting to see the arrogant Bernard with his red Mazda as the hare, jumping to conclusions far too rapidly and rushing around the place constantly. As Hannah puts it before he is proved wrong: “You've gone from a glint in your eye to a sure thing in a hop, skip and a jump” [80]. It is frequently pointed out to him that his theory disregards time. Note how he is convinced that his hero Byron could act with lightning speed and so finds nothing to question in Hannah's reconstruction of Byron's agenda if Bernard's theory is correct: “So he must have borrowed the book, written the review, posted it, seduced Mrs Chater, fought a duel and departed, all in the space of two or three days” [81]. Bernard's life is not quite so hectic although he does manage to fit quite a lot into his short stay at Sidley park (see Séverine Ruset's diagram of the time scheme in the play for a presentation of the play's dual chronology). Bernard's frenzied pace stands out all the more as it is opposed to four other “tortoise” characters who take their time. Both Valentine and Hannah are engaged in research which keeps them in one place. We very frequently see them at their work, and this is not the case for Bernard. As far as the other characters are concerned, although Thomasina is impetuous and impatient she does try to prove her theories are correct by long hard calculation. The same is also true of Septimus who apparently spent 22 years in his hermitage covering thousands of pages “with cabalistic proofs that the world was coming to an end” [39]. The end of the play too highlights Bernard's frenzy since we see his desperate attempts to extricate himself from his double humiliation alongside the waltzing of Septimus and

Thomasina [129-131]. This is the only time in the play when we see Bernard on stage at the same time as characters from the past. This is one of the ways in which Bernard is excluded from sharing experience. He does not participate in the joint reading of documents (Septimus, Hannah and Valentine), in the handling of the apple (Gus, Hannah, Septimus and Thomasina), in the dancing (Septimus, Thomasina, Hannah and Gus) or in the drinking of wine either (Septimus, Hannah and Valentine). In the end, it is the tortoise characters who get to the truth first, but it is a Pyrrhic victory for Septimus and Thomasina.

Before ending this brief discussion of the various objects in *Arcadia*, it is worth bringing in a final category which, like the others, serves several different functions and cannot be limited to a single category: the lamps and candle. I have chosen to leave them to the end for, although they could have been put in the first group since neither animal nor vegetable, they seem to have a different role in the play. Unlike the other objects discussed, these objects belong to the past even though we see them during scene 7 which allows past and present to overlap.

The lamps and the candle are not just brought on stage to tell the audience that the action is situated in the past. There are so many other signs there to do this, notably the costumes in the first half of the play. Nor do they function simply to indicate it is night in the past scenes (the Shakespearean practice), as most of the action takes place in daylight this would be a severe limitation. If we look at when and how these objects are used we will see that they are used differently to the other objects. The first use of a flame occurs in scene 3 when we see Septimus melting sealing wax before handing over a letter to Jellaby for the post [51]. There is no further use of light/heat until scene 6. Again it is linked to letters; Septimus uses the spirit burner brought on stage for Lady Croom's infusion to burn a letter he has received from Byron. This gesture is carried out to win Lady Croom's favour and seems to succeed if we look at the invitation she gives him at the end of the scene. The burning of Byron's letter is also an indirect allusion to the letter Bernard imagines Byron sending to Septimus which would confirm his theory [78]. After burning one letter, Septimus then burns two others whose contents we must also try to imagine from the clues Lady Croom gives us. One of these is addressed to Thomasina and obviously alludes to her mathematical interests; the other is, in Lady Croom's words: "full of the most insolent familiarities regarding several parts of my body" [94]. We begin to see why the letter was burned and not torn up. The play elsewhere links heat and passion in the description of Cleopatra which Thomasina is given to translate for example. Nor are the letters burned by Septimus the only papers to be destroyed in this way. All Septimus's papers

in the hermitage were apparently destroyed in a bonfire [40]. Thomasina evokes the destruction of the fire in the great library of Alexandria, a similar event but on a different scale [52]. The heat and light of the lamps and candle are there to make visible what is not visible, either because it belongs to a different spatio-temporal context altogether or because heat and light are functioning metaphorically to represent not just passion but also knowledge.

We suggested above that to destroy by fire is quite different from destroying by other means and this is true also in the case of Thomasina's death. The final sequence is structured in such a way that the spectator cannot but pay attention to the importance of light and heat. We are made aware of this through the lamp and the candle, functioning iconically, indexically and symbolically as well as through the dialogue. The last scene of the play contains many references to light both on and off-stage. Outside paper lanterns are glowing [124]. Inside Septimus is reading by the light of an oil lamp "to save [his] candles" [126]. Thomasina enters with her candlestick. This candlestick obviously serves an illusionistic function, but also points to the off-stage world. The stage directions then specify that outside a firework display has begun [126]. In the next room the amorous encounter between the Count and Lady Croom is hinted at through the playing of the piano. We might also think that the kisses exchanged by the onstage couple suggest something of the scene going on in the next room. The dramatic intensity of this sequence is further heightened by the fact that we know what fate has in store for Thomasina (and Septimus, although not immediately in his case). It is worth pointing out that when certain objects are linked to time in this play, it is not necessarily to indicate the time period of the moment. Objects like the candle can point forwards and backwards. Since we have been told previously that Thomasina died in a fire in her bedroom on the eve of her seventeenth birthday, when Septimus lights her candle for her and sends her off, telling her to "be careful with the flame" [132], we think back to what we have been told, we remember what has not actually happened yet. The way in which the candle is sometimes lit, then blown out, then lit again, forces the spectator to pay attention to it.

We should not forget that it is during this sequence with the lamp and candle that it is revealed that Thomasina's diagram is linked to the Second Law of thermodynamics [89] which explains heat loss. The sight of the burning flame or the earlier sound of the "distant regular thump of the steam engine" [111] serve to make abstract concepts much clearer for the audience. In Thomasina and Septimus's case, knowledge is linked to passion, symbolized by the candle flame, both fragile and danger. By the time we reach the modern generation, knowledge is associated with another

machine, the computer, from which the vital spark seems to have been removed.

In conclusion, we have remarked on the many ways in which Stoppard takes objects from the “real” world of the two time periods and uses them quite inventively. Taken individually, these objects are banal, but integrated into the action of the play, they allow effects which dialogue alone cannot achieve. Far from just indicating time and place, or just being elements in a whodunit, the objects we have mentioned make visible to the audience what is obscure (scientific theories), hidden (feelings and emotions). Objects replace the diagrams and equations which we can neither see nor understand. They also create powerful parallels and symmetry. Ultimately they make time visible: in the theatrical present, future and past coexist and interact. The way objects function in *Arcadia* finally disproves Valentine’s statement: “There’s an order things can’t happen in. You can’t open a door till there’s a house” [107]. On the stage, in fact, you can do this. Real objects: books, apples, candles become not something else, but something more in what Carlson has referred to as theatre’s “continuing colonization of reality” [89]. In the final paragraph of the chapter entitled “The World on Stage”, States insists on the importance of the creation of a world by the theatre. He explains how the actor takes the audience “into a world within the world itself” [46]. It could be argued that the objects in *Arcadia* also do this. And so we can conclude, as States concludes: “What happens, *when* it happens in the theatre is, as Shakespeare’s Polixenes might say, art. But the art itself is nature” [47].

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