The Hospital as a Two-Edged Weapon in Stoppard's Play
Every Good Boy Deserves Favour

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Abstract
Tom Stoppard condemns in his play Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, which he wrote in 1977, the unjust practices of using mental asylums as a tool of punishment for political dissidents. Where a political dissident, Alexander Ivanov, is put in the same ward with a mental patient, who carries the same name of Ivanov, and who imagines that he leads an orchestra.

One of Tom Stoppard's original works Every Good Boy Deserves Favour (henceforth EGBDF), opened 1 July 1977 at the Royal Festival Hall, London, and featured in the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Shakespeare Company, as part of the John Player Centenary Festival, directed by Trevor Nunn. The successful premier was followed in 1978 by an American tour that began in Ambler, Pennsylvania. Published in 1978, it stemmed in part from Stoppard's meditation upon the fate that might have been his had he remained in Czechoslovakia. Norman Barry affirms that "Stoppard had long been involved with Czech dissident movements (he was born in Czechoslovakia in 1937 but his family moved two years later) and his political views were not unknown but he had not let them interfere with his professional work in the theatre."

The idea of the play started with an invitation in 1974 from the American composer and conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, Andre Previn to Stoppard to write a piece that would feature a live symphony orchestra on stage and for which he would do music. Since it was a rare opportunity, Stoppard accepted immediately and then spent the next year and a half searching for an appropriate topic.

At the beginning Stoppard had no idea what to write about, "It took me a long time to come up with anything that made sense," Stoppard said. "I was trying to think up some kind of play in which having a symphony orchestra wouldn't look absurd or out of proportion." But since his only musical experience came through being "a triangle-player in kindergarten percussion band," he planned that the main character of the play is a triangle player. Stoppard began with the notion of a rich triangle player who owned an orchestra to be changed later into a lunatic who merely imagined his orchestra. The
idea languished until, increasingly concerned about human rights in
the Soviet bloc, Stoppard kept reading about Soviet dissidents who,
victimized by the abuse of psychiatry, were confined to mental
asylums for their political activities, and in April 1976 he visited the
Soviet Union, where he met Victor Fainberg, a Russian dissident who
had been arrested in "Red Square in August 1968, during a peaceful
demonstration against the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.
He had been pronounced insane- a not unusual fate for perfectly sane
opponents of Soviet tyranny- and in 1974 he had emerged into exile
from five years in the Soviet prison-hospital system." 7 Fainberg had
left Russia by 1976 and started working to secure the release of his
fellow-dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, "himself a victim of the abuse of
psychiatry in the USSR, whose revelations about the abuse had got
him sentenced to consecutive terms of prison, labour camp and
internal exile amounting to twelve years." 8

The form and the subject matter of the play coalesced in the
character of Bukovsky whom Stoppard describes as: "not a man to be
broken or silenced; an insistent, discordant note, one might say, in an
orchestrated society." 9 Thanks to an international campaign,
Bukovsky was released from prison and sent to the West in December
1976. Invited by Stoppard, Bukovsky attended a rehearsal of EGBDF
in June 1977. The play is dedicated to him and to Victor Fainberg. 10

Fainberg raised Stoppard's consciousness regarding the abuse of
psychiatric treatment in his country. Stoppard joined the Committee
Against Psychiatric Abuse, a group opposed to such practices as using
mental hospitals as places and treatments as methods of punishment
for political dissidents. 11 Stoppard addressed a Trafalgar Square rally
in London on the subject in August, and then marched to the Soviet
embassy there to deliver a petition of protest on dissidents' rights. By
1976, these events led to a visit, along with several representatives of
Amnesty International, to Moscow and Leningrad early in 1977
(designated International Prisoner of Conscience Year by Amnesty
International) to visit political dissidents, 12 where he met several
dissidents and the families of others who were imprisoned. He
returned to London to write an informative piece of the plight of these
people for the London Times. 13 At that period he also started writing
his first political drama, EGBDF. The play is closely based on an
article in the magazine Index On Censorship written by Fainberg
about his experiences. 14

In the previous month Stoppard had visited Prague, where he
met Vaclav Havel, the Czech playwright and dissident and future
president, whom Stoppard recognized, as Kenneth Tynan relates, as
his "mirror image" and grew increasingly concerned with his situation
as a political prisoner. For signing Charter 77, a document detailing
the lack of human rights in Czechoslovakia; Havel was imprisoned for four months. Since 1969 his work has been under severe government censorship. In February Stoppard wrote an article "Dirty Linen in Prague" about the Charter for the New York Times, and in June he visited Havel in Czechoslovakia. One month later, EGBDF made its debut.\(^5\)

While some critics think that EGBDF arose from now-outdated circumstances, the Czech director Jiri Zizka sees it as a still-timely comment on the perils of controlled societies, he notes: "It's also a piece about free will. The choices in front of the characters are pretty bleak: They're all participants in a regimented society, or insane, or in trouble."\(^6\)

The title of the play, is a "mnemonic for the lined notes in the treble clef,"\(^7\) used by music students to remember the notes on the lines of the musical stave: E, G, B, D, F. It also refers to, as John Simon sees, Sacha, the son of the Russian dissident of the play.\(^8\) A point affirmed by Adam Hetrick who says it is an indication for, "the ramifications of Alexander Ivanov, whose son's future is at risk during his father's incarceration."\(^9\)

Stoppard has written this play in remarkably minimal pieces that happen in different stage areas. Zizka, who directed the 2002 revival of the play at the Wilma Theatre in Philadelphia, arranged the set to "consist of three playing areas representing a cell, an office and a schoolroom … situated among the orchestra and connected by lit bridges that form a triangle--a figure that is key to the plot (and an instrument that is prominently heard in the music)."\(^10\)

Adding a full orchestra to the dramatis personae on stage represents a challenge, as Bob Crowley, set and costume designer, admits: "the logistics of putting 50 people on stage who are not meant to be there has been a mind-bender," he has had to think of effective aesthetic ways to seat and dress the Southbank Sinfonia. "It's such a sea of bodies," adds Bruno Poet, the lighting designer, "the lighting needs to be very precise, to pick out the actors and focus the audience."\(^11\)

Benedict Nightingale in The Times believes that the Morris-Barrett innovations give the play a meaning for our times: "The directors have had an idea that brilliantly links the lunatic's and the dissident's stories. Suddenly, thuggish warders patrol the orchestra, seizing, beating, even killing players in a crazed ballet, which emphasises that both men inhabit the same mad, unjust world."\(^12\)

The cast consists of six actors, in addition to the full orchestra, whose function is not only providing music throughout the play but forming an essential part of the action. Stoppard explains that: "Mr. Previn and I agreed early on that we would try to go beyond a mere
recitation for the concert platform, and also that we were not writing a piece for singers. In short, it was going to be a real play, to be performed in conjunction with, and bound up with, a symphony orchestra.”

The character of the doctor, introduced in Scene 3, multiplies the opportunities for comedy and focuses the play of ideas by identifying him as a player in the official and therefore "real" orchestra—the symphony present on stage. The play offers two exclusive contexts within which orchestral music may be played: Ivanov's delusory private symphony and the doctor's compulsory public symphony. Both are entrapped by their music, the doctor by his need to participate in the official orchestra, the patient by his inability to escape his private orchestra. When, in Scene 7, Stoppard assigns to the doctor lines identical to those spoken by Ivanov, "Do you play an instrument?" he begins to identify the doctor and patient as interchangeable in role and function: the doctor is mad, the patient is wise; the patient plays at being doctor while the doctor plays at being a musician:

Doctor: Hello. You must be Ivanov. Do you play a musical instrument?
Alexander: (Taken aback): Are you a patient?
Doctor: (Cheerfully): No, I am a doctor. You are a patient. It's a distinction which we try to keep going here, though I'm told it's coming under scrutiny in more advanced circles of psychiatric medicine... [I]f everybody... played a violin, I'd be out of a job.
Alexander: As a psychiatrist?
Doctor: No, as a violinist. The psychiatric hospitals would be packed to the doors. You obviously don't know much about musicians.

The play is largely set in a mental institution, where two characters share the name of Alexander Ivanov, a fact crucial to the denouement, and also share the same cell or "ward," as the staff of the Soviet mental hospital call it. The identical names obviously cause a continuous confusion. The political dissident Alexander Ivanov is institutionalized and detained for psychiatric help for his unacceptable political beliefs, and like Fainberg, he will not be discharged until he concedes that his statements against the government were brought on by an (alleged) mental disorder. Ivanov, on the other hand, is a genuine mental patient whose illness takes the form of imagining that he is a triangle player in an imaginary symphony orchestra whose sound is heard only by him and whose players he constantly berates for their alleged shortcomings. Mel Gussow believes that "the orchestra is a figment of his, and of our, imagination.... It is Mr. Stoppard's clever conceit that the orchestra performs at the madman's will, as the skeptical dissident stares in disbelief.”

Ivanov's illness estranges him from others and devalues him in the State's eyes, the frustration of this manifests itself in both
expressions of violence, and in a stronger dependence on the one thing he does have—his imaginary orchestra.

Alexander is officially reported to be imprisoned in the interests of public security, but, in fact, this incarceration is in the interests of State security. The doctor, who is responsible for both characters, takes the orders from a Colonel in the KGB. The other characters include the political Ivanov's son, Sacha, who also plays the triangle at school, and whose orthodox Soviet schoolmistress tries to get him to correct his own, as well as his father's dissident ways. She tries to convince him of the genuineness of his father's illness, he is supposed to talk his dad out of hunger strikes. At his school, away from the madness of the hospital, Sacha struggles with geometry lessons and his father's predicament. Coerced by his teacher to try to persuade his father to admit that he was mad and is now cured, he cries: "Papa, don't be rigid! / Be brave and tell them lies!"

Sacha gets into trouble at school as his teacher declares: "Detention is becoming a family tradition." He tries to help Alexander, yet his principled father won't admit to the errors of his ways. Both the State and the individual, stick to their principles, which lead to a kind of an impasse. The doctor also uses Alexander's son to try to persuade him to succumb and accept the establishment's terms to get his freedom. He tells Alexander, referring to Sacha: "He's a good boy. He deserves a father."

The incarceration of Alexander started "in the Leningrad Special Psychiatric Hospital on Arsenal'naya Street, where ...[he] was kept for thirty months, including two months on hunger strike," and like Fainberg, he could not be broken, rather, he proceeded with his resistance by going on another hunger strike. Alexander believes that when the authorities could not make him end his hunger strike:

They gave in. And when I was well enough they brought me here. This means they have decided to let me go. It is much harder to get from Arsenal'naya to a civil hospital than from a civil hospital to the street. But it has to be done right. They don't want to lose ground. They need a formula. It will take a little time but that's all right. I shall read War and Peace. Everything is going to be all right.

Alexander, "like the dissidents Stoppard knew and had read about, knows the formula the authorities use when they plan on releasing dissidents who cause more embarrassment than their incarceration is worth."

He himself has identified the main reason for his survival when he states: "They don't like you to die unless you can die anonymously. If your name is known in the West, it is an embarrassment... Russia is a civilized country ... and it is confusing if people starve themselves to death."
It is really his existence in printed form via his name that is keeping him alive. Were his name not known in the West, his body would be easily disposed of. By thus demonstrating the necessity of free speech and free press to check the abuse of power, Stoppard reinforces his protagonist's stand against, what the French philosopher Louis Althusser calls, the Repressive State Apparatus, "the repressive institutions through which the ruling class enforces its rule as such."\(^{34}\)

To survive, it was crucial for the dissidents to make the international media aware of their predicament. Stoppard, in an article for the *New York Times*, wrote: "The Czechoslovaks are now stuck between two opposite embarrassments: to pursue the logic of repression, or to climb down."\(^{35}\)

Alexander's hunger strike places the Soviet regime in a similar position drawing media attention, and when he proceeds with his strike, the authorities back down.

Alexander has been transferred to this mental hospital from the former stricter one as a result of his hunger strike, which has almost resulted in his death. He begins another hunger strike and refuses to come to an agreement with the authorities. To force him, the Soviet authorities use his son as an emotional means to try to talk him out of it. However, Alexander is decisive in his action, and this does not work, either. In a "Catch 22" situation, Alexander will not be released until he admits that he is mad and that sane people are never locked up in asylums. Michael Billington in *The Guardian* says "that reminds us that one of the worst features of tyranny is its ability to reorder reality. The perfectly sane Alexander will only be released once he admits he is mad and his plight is worsened by the fact that he has to coexist with an orchestral fantasist and that his future depends on a colonel who is a doctor of philology."\(^{36}\)

The Doctor, the psychiatrist "treating" the two Ivanovs himself plays the violin in a real orchestra, and the distinction between reality and illusion is lessened by having the onstage orchestra variously represent Ivanov's fancy and the Doctor's reality. He is a relatively kindly man, even though his science is a tool of the regime. He is also funny, but perhaps only because he is a character in a Stoppardian play. There is also a Soviet Bureaucrat, the Colonel who runs the hospital though his doctorate is in semantics, and ultimately orchestrates the prisoners' release.\(^{37}\) The State is a central metaphor of the orchestra where the heavily orchestrated madness of society is staged. One of the main themes of the play is the State and the "little man." Stoppard compares the State to an orchestra where all the tools (people) should play in the same rhythm at the same notes. Anyone who stands out from the overall sound is recognised as crazy. To be accepted back into society, people are required to suppress
themselves, to obey, to overlook its madness and to conform. Sacha, the school student, is asked by his teacher to write in his notebook a million times: "I am a member of an orchestra and we must play together." The teacher echoes the doctor saying to Alexander: "We have to act together." Virtually every one of the characters openly expresses her/his attitude toward the "orchestra". Sacha says: "I do not want to be in the orchestra." This represents a form of protest, but further under the pressure of others he retreats: "I'll go back in the orchestra!" The teacher at the school expresses the basic principle that there is a State orchestra, "I am a member of an orchestra and we must play together." Ivanov's statement is interesting: "we all have some musician in us. Any man says he has no musician in him, I'll call that man a bigot." First, the public is opposed to any person who denies his attitude to the orchestra. Second, there is an expressed awareness of belonging to society. Ivanov believes that everyone should have a musical instrument, each is playing a role in the orchestra; if there was any individual with no tool, the society would deny their existence, as it itself belongs to the orchestra. In Ivanov's monologue one finds the only reference in the whole play where the orchestra, as a society, has a positive connotation. In all other Orchestra cases – it is a state machine that suppresses individuality.

Martin L. Holden sees that the shared name between the two characters generates a strong examination of identity in the play. In the case of the imagined orchestra, "the playwright suggests that an individual's mind and perceptions –sane or not– are the foundations upon which a sense of self is built." and the actual orchestra performing onstage during the play is one way to theatrically enhance this question of perception and self.

The symphony literally and metaphorically imprisons the dissident and schoolboy in their respective cells, surrounding the playing platform physically with the collective body of musicians whose score Alexander and Sacha refuse to follow. The orchestra functions brilliantly to direct shifts in tone from menacing to playful, although the majority of the music is quite dark, brooding and ominous. "The comedy in the play hinges on the characters' differing perceptions of the orchestra, none of which coincides and all of which become confused with one another at some point during the action."

The private nature of the orchestra is recognized as the hallucination of the mental patient Ivanov, who controls its playing while Alexander looks on in bewilderment. The comedy of the scene arises from both cellmates' confusion. One of them cannot hear music perceptible to the other as well as to the audience. The other cannot stop hearing music no one else hears except the audience, allowed to eavesdrop on his delusion.
Much of the comedy of the play is provided by the lunatic Ivanov and his imaginary orchestra. He also comments on the social themes as he criticises the orchestra and cross-examine Alexander's musical inclinations which indicate political overtones and insinuations of violent repression, "If I beat you to a pulp would you try to protect your face or your hands?" Also, it is Ivanov who investigates how Alexander was brought to this asylum for political agitation. Alexander's "crime" was writing letters to the Communist "Party, to the newspapers.... To foreigners," protesting "that sane people were being put in mental hospitals for their political opinions." Stoppard's puns ironically when Alexander refers to his activism as doing "something really crazy," and his eagerness to tell the truth sends him to an insane asylum. The theme of the State and the individual is closely related to the theme of relative madness. The dramatist poses the question: whom do we have to admit crazy - one who sees the inadequacy of the State system and begins to talk about it, or the person who agrees to consider this the norm? Having one's own, independent opinion - is also a sign of madness. According to Soviet psychiatry "ideas about a struggle for truth and justice are formed by personalities with a paranoid structure.

Doctor: Your behaviour is causing alarm. I'm beginning to think you're off your head. Quite apart from being a paranoid schizophrenic. I have to consider seriously whether an Ordinary Hospital can deal with your symptoms.
Alexander: I have no symptoms, I have opinions.
Doctor: Your opinions are your symptoms. Your disease is dissent. Your kind of schizophrenia does not presuppose changes of personality noticeable to others. I might compare your case to that of Pyotr Grigorenko of whom it has been stated by our leading psychiatrists at the Serbsky Institute, that his outwardly well adjusted behaviour and formally coherent utterances were indicative of a pathological development of the personality. Are you getting the message?

The message which the authorities try to convey through the doctor is that any individual who attempts to assert an opinion which is inconsistent with the official State belief system can be declared insane, as long as the State is in control of the institutions in which the definition of insanity is established. Furthermore, the Doctor reveals that despite Alexander's "delusions" that sane people are put in mental hospitals," they are ready to let him go: "It seems to me that the best answer is for you to go home. Would Thursday suit you? ... There is an Examining Commission on Wednesday. We shall aim at curing your schizophrenia by Tuesday night."

The doctor, a supporter of the regime, insists on acting as an abuser himself:

Alexander: I was never mad, and my treatment was barbaric.
Doctor: Stupidity is one thing I can't cure. I have to show that I have treated you. You have to recant and show gratitude for the treatment. We have to act together.

Alexander: The KGB broke my door and frightened my son and my mother-in-law. My madness consisted of writing to various people about a friend of mine who is in prison. This friend was twice put in mental hospitals for political reasons, and then they arrested him for saying that sane people were put in mental hospitals, and then they put him in prison because he was sane when he said this; and I said so, and they put me in a mental hospital.\(^{56}\)

Drawing on Fainberg's real-life experiences, Alexander relates the inhumane treatment that he receives at the Arsenal'naya. The "treatment" includes injecting various drugs that cause severe physical discomfort besides many other ways of torture. Despite the harsh treatment he faces and the possibility that he might lose his life, Alexander adheres to the moral values he believes in.

Alexander has decided to denounce Soviet repression, and he never changes his course of action. Paul Delaney writes:

"[Alexander's] actions spring neither from non-conformist self-indulgence nor from a pragmatic sense of what is feasible but from a firm sense of moral right and wrong... Stoppard explicitly voices his concern that moral values must be incarnated in moral action ... [EGBDF] celebrates an individual who adheres to a standard of values higher than that of his society and who has the courage to act upon those values.\(^{57}\)

Whether dealing with the Doctor or with his son, Alexander adheres to his values. Sacha is summoned to the Psychiatric Hospital to persuade his father to eat and to comply with the answers the authorities want to hear before they release him. The son's understandably pragmatic and very human desire for his father to capitulate so that they can be reunited is countered by Alexander's explanation of why he must remain rigid and adhere to his values and principles: "Dear Sacha, try to see/what they call their liberty/is just the freedom to agree/that one and one is sometimes three."\(^{58}\) To acquiesce to the terms of his release means disavowing the barbarity and inhumanity of his treatment. Alexander asserts that doing as they want "helps them to go on being wicked. It helps people to think that perhaps they're not so wicked after all."\(^{59}\) Though he loves his son and understands his son's need for him to be home, he sacrifices personal well-being: "What about all the other fathers? And mothers?"\(^{60}\) The system can only be toppled when individuals sacrifice their self-interests for what is the proper, moral thing to do. Alexander tells his son, and in a way reminds himself: "To thine own self be true/one and one is always two."\(^{61}\) He refuses to conform to Soviet double think and is willing to die to show the injustice of the repressive system.
Throughout the play, Alexander acts on a consistent belief that the injustice and immorality of the Soviet system must be resisted regardless of personal consequences or political expediency. Sacha's school lessons about mathematical principles merge with the political and moral lesson that Alexander is teaching—that some actions are simply better than others, that the United Nations' Declaration of Universal Human Rights must be practiced.

Sacha's inability to change his father's mind puts the authorities in a bind. They cannot let Alexander die, nor can they release him until he admits he is cured from his 'alleged' madness. Sacha tells the Doctor, "you must not be so rigid." The Doctor knows only one solution to this problem and he already told Alexander about it.

Alexander "identifies people by letters of the alphabet," to let others know why he ended up in this prison/hospital. When Ivanov asks him "How did it all begin?" Alexander explains:

My friend, C, demonstrated against the arrest of A and B. … and they put him back into the mental hospital. D was a man who wrote to various people about the trial of A and B and held meetings with his friends E, F, G and H, who were all arrested, so I, J, K, L and a fifth man demonstrated against the arrest of E, F, G and H, and were themselves arrested. D was arrested the next day. The fifth man was my friend C, who had just got out of the mental hospital where they put him for demonstrating against the arrest of A and B, and I told him he was crazy to demonstrate against the arrest of E, F, G and H, and he got three years in a labour camp. I thought this really wasn't fair. M compiled a book on the trials of C, I, J, K and L, and with his colleagues N, O, P, Q, R and S attended the trial of T who had written a book about his experiences in a labour camp, and who got a year in a labour camp. In the courtroom it was learned that the Russian army had gone to the aid of Czechoslovakia. M, N, O, P, Q, R and S decided to demonstrate in Red Square the following Sunday, when they were all arrested and variously disposed of in labour camps, psychiatric hospitals and internal exile.

Stoppard explains that "the off-stage hero of Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, referred to as 'my friend C', is Vladimir Bukovsky," who suffers because of his political attitudes. Moreover "Victor Fainberg in his own identity makes an appearance in the text as one of the group 'M to S' in the speech where Alexander identifies people by letters of the alphabet."

With regard to the designation of names of the characters in the play it can be noted that only three characters are endowed with personal names - Alexander, his son Sacha, and lunatic Ivanovo. But upon further examination it turns out that their names are the same, and Alexander Ivanov - the only proper name, is available for each of the characters in the play (Sacha is a diminutive of Alexander). Such a
match is, above all, a function of plot: the same names, which readers / viewers will learn only in the climax of the play, allow recognizing the "cure" of Alexander and Ivanov, and releasing them from the psychiatric hospital. This coincidence of names represents a kind of depersonalisation. On the one hand, Stoppard probably knows that Ivanov and Alexander are among the most common male names in Russia. On the other hand, the author creates a certain continuity of characters - from nonconformist-boy to dissident father, from a recognized crazy freedom fighter against the "State Orchestra" to the madman, who fancies an orchestra that only plays in his head. Stoppard creates a collective image that combines many features of the Soviet dissidents, with whom he was personally acquainted, a reflection of many lives and a broken system.68

As for the other actors in the play, they all belong to the public system, on the basis of antonomasia, named according to their social functions - Teacher, Colonel, Doctor. They are not individualised characters; instead they are conceived as generalised images. They are elements of the system, or, more precisely, the tools of the State Orchestra: they think stereotypically, they combine bigotry and fear of the system and its rules.

When Ivanov asks Alexander if he reads any music, and Alexander answers with a "no", Ivanov tells him: "Do not worry: crochets, minims, sharp, flat, every good boy deserves favour. You'll pick it up in no time,"69 this can be interpreted as the image of the State (as an orchestra), which consists of different people (from different instruments), each one deserves attention and good relations. Alexander must understand and reconcile that all people are part of the orchestra, and the teacher tells his son, "if you're a good boy I might find you a better instrument,"70 the best tool is the best offer of the social role, the teacher promises a better position in society, provided obedience. Sacha turns into a juvenile delinquent, but on condition of obedience (on his part and on the part of his father), and submission to the system, their social role and position will be higher. And "everyone deserves it."71

Through connecting the theme of the relationship between man and the State with the theme of imprisonment, Stoppard draws a parallel: State = prison = hospital. The word "ward", (a section or a room in a hospital) is often confused with the word "cell" (a room in a prison). The Doctor explains to Alexander repeatedly:

This is what is called an Ordinary Psychiatric Hospital, that is to say a civil mental hospital coming under the Ministry of Health, and we have wards. Cells are what they have in prisons, and also, possibly, in what are called Special Psychiatric Hospitals, which
come under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and are for prisoners who represent a special danger to society, or rather, patients.\textsuperscript{72}

The doctor makes it clear that if Alexander wants to be released from the hospital, he has to agree that he was rightly confined to the mental hospital because he is truly insane.

Patricia Ann Greiner refers that the play deals with the conflicts among Alexander, who has stubbornly refused to recant his position, his doctor, who prefers patients to conform to the system, and Alexander's young son Sacha, who admires his father's stand for truth but also feels a strong pressure to conform and wants his father back home at any price. The central point made by the play is the evil of using hospitals for punishment.\textsuperscript{73}

\textit{EGBDF} makes a more overt use of disability as a means of symbolising that "something is rotten in the state," in a clear reference to Hamlet's Denmark. In this case," mental illness is employed as a means of reflecting the lunacy of totalitarian regime ... the play strongly makes the point that sanity is as much a matter of perspective as the rationality underlying a political system.\textsuperscript{74}

Stoppard attacks the Soviet prison/hospital system by making it look ridiculous, more comical than horrifying. The Doctor spends much of his time playing in an orchestra. He makes jokes at his patients' expense and his treatments consist of handing out pills which have nothing to do with mental illness:

\begin{quote}
Doctor: Yes, he has an identity problem. I forget his name.

……………………………………

Doctor: . . . For example, you are here because you have delusions that sane people are put in mental hospitals.

Alexander: But I am in a mental hospital.

Doctor: That's what I said. If you're not prepared to discuss your case rationally, we're going to go round in circles.\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

The head of the hospital is a doctor of philology, who specialises in semantics. His plan to cure Alexander consists of placing him in a cell with a genuine lunatic who happens to share Alexander's name, another of the system's "imaginative leaps." Alexander is confronted with a world in which dissidence is equated with insanity.

The chaos and foolishness of the hospital signals a small revival of the absurd, but it is a revival in a form significantly changed from Stoppard's earlier uses of absurdity. Stoppard references disability in an entirely different way, using mental illness as a very deliberate and obvious metaphor for Soviet politics: "Set in a mental institution, the play reflects the old adage that there are none so blind as those that will not see, and comments on the absurdity of a state run by people that will not recognize that it's opponents are just as 'sane' as they are."\textsuperscript{76} Only the official Soviet system is made to appear absurd. Alexander, with his rational explanations of his behaviour and his
pointed questioning of the "treatments" given to him, is a small island of sanity in the chaos of the hospital. Stoppard tries to affirm that when society appears absurd, the individual can create order on a smaller scale. Alexander himself presents a very sane counterpoint to the Soviet System. He is no wild-eyed radical, but an ordinary man who wrote a letter of protest. His normalcy is stressed, implying that his fate could happen to anyone under totalitarianism:

My childhood was uneventful. My adolescence was normal. I got an ordinary job, and married a conventional girl who died uncontroversially in childbirth. Until the child was seven the only faintly interesting thing about me was that I had a friend who kept getting arrested. Then one day I did something really crazy.77

Alexander also presents the terrifying side of the hospital/prison in a description of his earlier treatments:

For the politicals, punishment and medical treatment are intimately related. I was given injections of aminazin, sulfazin, triflazin, haloperidol, and insulin, which caused swellings, cramps, headaches, trembling, fever, and the loss of various abilities including the ability to read, write, sleep, sit, stand, and button my trousers. When all this failed to improve my condition, I was stripped and bound head to foot with lengths of wet canvas. As the canvas dried it became tighter and tighter until I lost consciousness. They did this to me for ten days in a row, and still my condition did not improve.78

In this monologue Alexander reveals the horrors of a punitive psychiatry that was used against political prisoners at the time. Mental treatment as a punishment is seen as the focus of the play, as anti-Soviet agitators are placed in government psychiatric hospitals. Since EGBDF is, as Stoppard describes it a "real play about real people,"79 it serves as a very realistic condemnation of the Soviet systematic abuse of psychiatry "where psikhushkas (mental hospitals) were used as prisons in order to isolate political prisoners, [and] discredit their ideas."80

Alexander's recitals of earlier experiences insure that the ugly truths of the "hospital" system are not replaced by the comically absurd portrayal seen on stage. Alexander is further raised in the audience's estimation through his relationship with his son. His concern for Sacha, who is already motherless, is another factor that makes Alexander's decision to sacrifice himself to his conceptions of justice even harder. As Victor Cahn notes, the presence of Sacha injects a note of "extraordinary compassion and anguish into the play."81

To create an appropriate impression Stoppard utilises the language as a tool, he uses words associated with the description of the prison, not a psychiatric hospital - cells, bars, peepholes, gaol, warders, trusties, convicted criminals, political, punishment, etc. Alexander relates that:
In the Arsenal'naya they have cells. There are bars on the windows, peepholes in the doors, and the lights burn all night. It is run just like a gaol, with warders and trusties, but the regime is more strict, and the male nurses are convicted criminals serving terms for theft and violent crimes, and they beat and humiliates the patients and steal their food, and are protected by the doctors, some of whom wear KGB uniforms under their white coats.  

In his description of the torture he faced at the hospital, "I was given injections", "I was stripped and bound", Alexander uses either passive tense or the pronoun "they", which acts as a subject. The "impersonal" illustrates the contrast between the individual "I" and the stranger "they". "They" turn into blind and heartless employees of the state system, and cease to be human beings. Alexander adds that: "They have forgotten their mortality." 

Although he likes the play, Ian Shuttleworth, of the Financial Times, contemplates: "To put it harshly, this bleak, fantastical indictment of the Soviet Union's use of psychiatric hospitalisation against dissidents is a play for yesterday." His concern is that the "play says nothing about today's Russia or about our own conduct."

Shuttleworth's point can be challenged by the fact that governments around the world still lock up political prisoners under the pretext of being mentally ill. The play was inspired by dissidents who opposed their regimes in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Those "subversives" were simply seeking that their countries' constitutional freedoms be enforced. In EGBDF, against the teacher's claims regarding the various types of freedom offered in the Constitution, Sacha wonders if they can appeal to the man who wrote that Constitution for assistance, but the teacher reveals that Nikolai Bukharin was shot soon after he wrote it. This fact makes clear that these "guaranteed" freedoms, the basic human rights that underlie most modern free and democratic societies, are principles that exist on paper but not in practice. It is the allowance of these freedoms that Stoppard champions as being universal human rights, rights that people must actively promote, protect, and preserve, both at home and in other countries.

In the official asylum, comic reversal is the rule rather than the exception, although the Doctor would like to believe otherwise. Alexander's doctor is not, of course, genuinely insane, but he could be, since, like the insane, he lacks a standard by which to distinguish the well from the sick except that of role: those called patients are sick and those called doctors are well—unless, that is, they play musical instruments. Without such a standard, mental hospitals can be abused by those in power without fear of consequences. The upside-down logic of comic doubles and reversed roles are perpetrated solely by the doctor and the Colonel— the absurd symptoms of a tyrannical system.
at which Stoppard is pointing his ridicule. A petty functionary, the doctor merely does what he is told. Alexander follows the doctor's comic statement with a serious and chilling account of his arrest and torture, at the end of which he concludes, "When they saw I intended to die they lost their nerve . . . They lost. And they will have to see that it is so. They have forgotten their mortality." 87

The seventh scene marks the turning point in the action, falling at the thematic and structural centre of the play. Here, the asylum becomes a microcosm of Soviet officiadom, by which the sane and the insane receive the same prescription: take a laxative and learn to view reality as the authorities do, learn to play with the official orchestra. In refusing to change his description of his experience, Alexander rejects the assumption that justice is merely the creation of our utterances, holding out instead for a natural sense of right, intelligible to all. Against this reversible world Alexander and Sacha define their moral stance by remaining static and unyielding.

After Scene 7 both the comic and serious actions intensify. Alexander draws near death by starvation while the madman and the doctor switch roles, Ivanov taking a seat at the psychiatrist's desk and the doctor taking his seat at a symphony rehearsal. The comedy turns grotesque in Scene 11 as Ivanov, posing as the psychiatrist, answers Sacha's questions in the distorted terms of his obsession:


The tense comedy of this scene gives way to the intense lyricism of Sacha's search for his father and his desperate attempt to convince him to stay alive:

Sacha: Papa, don't be rigid! Be brave and tell them lies!

............................................ Tell them lies. Tell them they've cured you. Tell them you're grateful. 89

The situation is at an impasse: Alexander cannot be released until he admits he is cured. The authorities cannot let him go without losing face. But neither can they afford the publicity of a death by hunger strike.

The "logical" impasse can only be surmounted by the illogic of a farce whose rules govern events in the asylum. At the end the Colonel sweeps onstage in a grand entrance in a parody of a deus ex machina. He enters to save the hero from certain death, and his subsequent actions have been widely misunderstood by audiences as well as critics."Organ music. The Colonel's entrance is as impressive as possible. The organ accompanies his entrance." 90 The Colonel wears a grandiose sky blue uniform with a flowing cloak, or something as impressive as that. His costume and the organ music try to outdo each other.
The Colonel thinks about a new solution because he has had enough of this dissident and wants to get rid of him. During an official assessment, making use of their namesakes he replaces them, he asks Ivanov a question appropriate for Alexander and Alexander a question appropriate for Ivanov. Each can thus answer truthfully and still satisfy the Colonel, he asks the lunatic Ivanov, "Would a Soviet doctor put a sane man into a lunatic asylum, in your opinion?" Ivanov, baffled, answers, "I shouldn't think so." The Colonel goes on to ask the dissident Alexander if he hears music, which of course he does not. Satisfied that the system has effectively cured the men of their conditions, the Colonel ordered their release as a culmination of a carefully orchestrated plan to set Alexander free while still saving face. The satire redoubles as the Colonel becomes entangled in his own fictions, confusing the identities of the two patients whom he had insisted on placing in the same cell, mistakenly setting them both free.

Although the target for Stoppard's satire was the Soviet regime, to consider the relationship between sanity and insanity as a matter of perspective could be regarded as another manifestation of the dichotomy between the medical and social model of disability.

Many critics and audiences interpreted this confusion as emblematic of bureaucratic bungling, a comic suggestion that the Soviet regime could fall through its own ineptitude, that the prisoners were released by mistake, to tame a happy ending. But this was not the case; it was a studied decision by the regime which wanted to avoid "the embarrassment of continuing to persecute a famous dissident. That was the only relief available from the horrors of communism, but as Stoppard well knows, it was a poor consolation for the thousands of unknown victims of tyranny." Many critics and audiences interpreted this confusion as emblematic of bureaucratic bungling, a comic suggestion that the Soviet regime could fall through its own ineptitude, that the prisoners were released by mistake, to tame a happy ending. But this was not the case; it was a studied decision by the regime which wanted to avoid "the embarrassment of continuing to persecute a famous dissident. That was the only relief available from the horrors of communism, but as Stoppard well knows, it was a poor consolation for the thousands of unknown victims of tyranny."92

Stoppard's intent carries more serious and so bearing overtones. The Soviet authorities know exactly what they are doing; though they tacitly concede defeat, Alexander cannot claim victory. They have not overtly acknowledged any wrongdoing, and thus the thousands of other political prisoners, the other mothers and fathers Alexander referred to, remain incarcerated. Though Alexander is released, it is not on his own terms because what he is fighting, the State system of repression remains. Stoppard notes: "It's not a particularly optimistic ending."93 Martin Huckerby adds: "The final anguish is caused by the dissident having to decide whether to go along with the ploy in order to gain his freedom."94 Thus, EGBDF offers a mixed message.

Alexander is free to go, but Sacha's closing line: "Everything can be all right" doesn't mean "everything is all right." The harsh reality is that thousands of other dissidents remain imprisoned. The audience can revel in Alexander's release, but they should realize that it is a partial and limited victory over the repressive Soviet regime.96
EGBDF compresses the rhythm of alternating comic and serious impulses under the urgency of Alexander's life-threatening hunger strike. As a result, the spectator's attention is divided between the absurdities of the asylum and the reasonableness of its prisoner, against whose positive moral standards the regime's moral bankruptcy lies exposed.97 Since there was initially only one performance, there was no opportunity to correct the misperception. However, when the show was remounted a year later at the Mermaid Theatre, the text remained identical but the final scene was restaged, trying to indicate that the Colonel knew exactly what he was doing. Paul Delaney reports that by the end of the run "the doctor was frantically gesticulating to call the attention of the Colonel to the correct identities of the prisoners while the colonel was suavely—and quite deliberately—ignoring him."98

Another clear indication that Alexander's release has been orchestrated is the doctor's declaration that:"Colonel—or rather Doctor—Rozinsky, who has taken over your case, chose your cell- or rather ward-mate personally."99 Rozinsky puts those two inmates together in the same ward because they carry the same name.100 Being a Doctor of Philology, specializing in Semantics and not a real psychiatrist "indicates that the Soviet authorities are playing a game—that they will not openly acknowledge defeat, but rather will use a semantic confusion over prisoners with identical names."101 The Doctor considers the Colonel as a genius who is "proud to serve the State in any capacity."102 His genius lies "in making Alexander's release appear to be accidental, thereby precluding any need for a public admission of the error of locking him up in the first place."103 So the system prevails, even in failure.

In terms of complex relationships of the heroes of the "orchestra", the play reaches a very interesting ending. The teacher and the doctor have already joined the orchestra. Ivanov also finds his place in the orchestra-State. Alexander and Sacha are in the direction of the orchestra; father and son finally met, perhaps waiting for their happy life in society, and they will become part of this society. But it is clear that they have not acceded to any particular group of musicians, and are separate from the other characters of the play. Stoppard does not say clearly what happens to the heroes in the future, but because Alexander is persevered, survived and remained true to his convictions, there is hope for change.

For the moment, everything will be all right. But the future is uncertain. The dark closing music of the symphony plays out the long range implications of the action.
Notes:

1 Demastes, 369.
2 Jenkins, 136.
3 Barry, 17.
4 Stoppard, Introduction 5.
5 qtd. in Klein et al. 44.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid 6-7.
9 Ibid 7.
10 Ibid.
11 Greiner 135.
12 Stoppard, Introduction 8.
13 Ibid.
14 Demastes, 365.
15 Greiner, 152.
16 qtd. in Klein et al., 45.
17 Hoyle, 775.
18 Simon, 82.
19 Hetrick, 34.
20 Klein et al., 45.
23 Stoppard, Introduction 5.
24 EGBDF, 26.
25 Gussow, 145.
26 EBDF, 18.
27 Ibid, 3.
28 Ibid, 19.
29 Ibid, 29.
31 Ibid, 25.
32 Fleming, 124.
33 Ibid.
34 Ferretter, 83.
35 qtd. in Delaney, 113.
36 Billington, 2009.
37 Simon, 83.
38 EGBDF, 20.
39 Ibid, 28.
40 Ibid, 19.
41 Ibid, 33.
42 Ibid, 20.
43 Ibid, 17.
44 Holden, 10.
45 Kelly, 178-179.
46 Ibid, 179.
47 Ibid.
48 EGBDF, 17.
50 Ibid, 23.
51 Ibid, 24.
52 Gold, 29-30.
53 EGBDF, 30.
54 Ibid, 27.
55 Ibid, 28.


Delaney, Paul. Tom Stoppard in Conversation. Ann Arbor: U of

المستشفى كسلاح ذو حدين في مسرحية توم ستوبارد (كل ولد صالح يستحق الاهتمام)
من أطروحة: مظاهر المرض في الدراما البريطانية الحديثة: مدخل تفصيلي-اجتماعي
قدمته: جنان وحيد جاسم (طالبة دكتوراه/قسم اللغة الإنجليزية/كلية الآداب- جامعة بغداد)
إشراف: أ.د. هناء خليف غني (كلية الآداب/ الجامعة المستنصرية)

الملخص
يدين توم ستوبارد في مسرحيته (كل ولد صالح يستحق الاهتمام) التي كتبها في 1977
الممارسات المجحفة الناجمة عن استخدام المصطلحات العقلية بوصفها وسيلة لمعاقبة
المعارض السياسيين. إذ يتم وضع المعارض السياسي ألكساندر إيفانوف في ناحية واحد مع
شخص مختلط عقليا، والذي صادف أن يكون اسمه أيضا إيفانوف، والذي يختبر إليه أنه يدير
فرقة موسيقية.