



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature Post-Graduate Programme

**TOM STOPPARD'S PLAYFUL APPROACH TO
INTELLECTUALITY:
A STUDY OF
*ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD AND
TRAVESTIES***

Aslı TAŞER

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2007

**TOM STOPPARD’S PLAYFUL APPROACH TO
INTELLECTUALITY:
A STUDY OF
*ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD AND
TRAVESTIES***

Aslı TAŞER

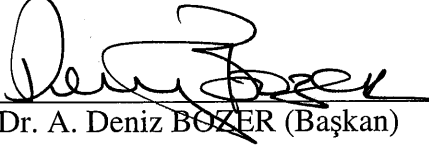
Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature Post-Graduate Programme

Master’s Thesis

Ankara, 2007

KABUL VE ONAY

Aslı TAŞER tarafından hazırlanan “Tom Stoppard’s Playful Approach to Intellectuality: A Study of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*” başlıklı bu çalışma, 10 Eylül 2007 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER (Başkan)



Doç. Dr. Nur AKKERMAN



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hande SADUN



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şebnem KAYA (Danışman)



Yrd. Doç. Dr. Aytül ÖZÜM

Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

Prof. Dr. İrfan ÇAKIN
Enstitü Müdürü

BİLDİRİM

Hazırladığım tezin tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin kağıt ve elektronik kopyalarının Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü arşivlerinde aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğim onaylarım:

- ☐ Tezimin tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.
- ☐ Tezim sadece Hacettepe Üniversitesi yerleşkelerinden erişime açılabilir.
- ☒ Tezimin 2. yıl süreyle erişime açılmasını istemiyorum. Bu sürenin sonunda uzatma için başvuruda bulunmadığım takdirde, tezimin tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.

10.09.2007



Aslı TAŞER

*Dedicated to my mother, and
my late father*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Şebnem Kaya whose invaluable support and encouragement helped me a lot complete this thesis. Her contributions, detailed comments and insight have always been of great value to me. I am also grateful to her for providing me with useful sources, from which I got many ideas.

I am particularly grateful to Prof. Dr. A. Deniz Bozer, Asst. Prof. Dr. Hande Sadun, Asst. Prof. Dr. Aytül Özüm, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nur Akkerman for their kind contributions and suggestions. I also wish to extend my acknowledgements to all the academic members of the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University, who have invaluable traces on this study.

I am greatly indebted to my family and friends for their endless patience, understanding and support. Without their encouragements, I would have had great difficulty in completing this thesis. I also wish to express my warmest thanks to my beloved brothers who have never lost faith in me. Finally, I owe heartfelt thanks to my dearest mother who has always been by my side.

ÖZET

TAŞER, Aslı. “Tom Stoppard’s Playful Approach to Intellectuality: A Study of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*,” Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2007.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Tom Stoppard’ın *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966) ve *Travesties* (1974) adlı oyunlarını teknik ve içerik bakımından incelemek ve bu karmaşık oyunların merkezindeki ciddi konuların, daha açık olmak gerekirse, felsefe ve metafizikle ilgili düşünceler ile sanatla ilgili konular hakkındaki bitmek bilmeyen tartışmaların, eğlendirici bir yaklaşımla ele alındığını; bir diğer deyişle, bu konuların, yazarın kullandığı ve ayırt edici özelliği hazırcevaplık dolu konuşmalar, metaforlar, sözcük oyunları, metinlerarası göndermeler, aşırma konular ile edebi, tarihi ya da gerçek hayattan izler taşıyan oyun karakterleri olan, zeki ve esprili üslup aracılığıyla, önemsizleştirildiğini göstermektir.

Kapsam açısından ise, tezin giriş bölümünün ilk kısmında Tom Stoppard’ın hayatı ve eserleri tanıtılmaktadır. İkinci kısımda, yazarın üslubu, özellikle de mizahı kullanarak oyunlarının entelektüel içeriğini nasıl ele aldığı vurgusuyla dikkate alınmaktadır. Takip eden iki ana bölümde ise yazarın entelektüeliteye eğlendirici yaklaşımını tam olarak gösteren *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* ve *Travesties* adlı oyunlar, Stoppard tarafından kullanılan temalar ve teknikler açısından ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenmekte ve tartışılmaktadır. Son olarak, Stoppard’ın oyunlarının içeriğini oluşturan ciddi konuların ve entelektüel çeşitliliğin, yazarın farklı tiyatral ve edebi yöntemlerin kullanımıyla süslenmiş eğlendirici üslubuyla önemsiz hale getirildiği sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Travesties*, mizah, entelektüel tiyatro, parodi, öykünme

ABSTRACT

TAŞER, Aslı. “Tom Stoppard’s Playful Approach to Intellectuality: A Study of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*,” Master’s Thesis, Ankara, 2007.

This study aims to analyse, thematically and technically, Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966) and *Travesties* (1974) and to discuss that the serious issues, to be more specific, the infinite debates on metaphysical and philosophical ideas as well as discussions on topics related with art, which lie at the centre of these complex plays, are treated in a lighthearted manner or are rather trivialised through the playwright’s use of humorous witty style characterised by repartees, metaphors, puns, intertextual borrowings, plagiarised plots, and allusive characters - either literary or historical or real.

As for the scope, in the first part of the introduction, an account of Tom Stoppard’s life and works will be given; in the second part, the playwright’s style will be taken into consideration with special emphasis on how he deals with the intellectual content of his plays through his use of humour. In the following two main chapters, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*, which perfectly illustrate his playful approach to intellectuality, will be examined and discussed in a detailed and comparative manner in terms of the themes and techniques employed by Stoppard. Finally, it will be concluded that the serious issues and the intellectual diversity in the content of Stoppard’s plays are trivialised through the playwright’s humorous style which is embellished with the use of several different literary and theatrical devices.

Key Words

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Travesties*, humour, intellectual drama, parody, pastiche

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ÖZET	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	iv
INTRODUCTION	
1. TOM STOPPARD’S LIFE AND WORKS.....	1
2. TOM STOPPARD’S STYLE AND INFLUENCES.....	33
CHAPTER I: <i>ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD</i>	44
CHAPTER II: <i>TRAVESTIES</i>	75
CONCLUSION	109
APPENDIX A: A LIST OF TOM STOPPARD’S WORKS	
A.1 WORKS FOR THE STAGE.....	115
A.2 WORKS FOR THE RADIO.....	116
A.3 WORKS FOR THE SCREEN.....	116
A.4 NON-FICTION.....	117
WORKS CITED	118

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Magritte, René. *This is not a Pipe*. 1928-29. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. 16 June 2007 <www.artinthepicture.com/paintings/view/php?nr=141>.
2. Magritte, René. *The Menaced Assassin*. 1927. Museum of Mod. Art, New York. 16 June 2007 <www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:The_Menaced_Assassin.jpg>.
3. Duchamp, Marcel. *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. 1912. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. 16 June 2007 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Duchamp>.
4. Poussin, Nicholas. *Et in Arcadia Ego, No.1*. 1627. The Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees, Chatsworth. 16 June 2007 <<http://www.abcgallery.com/P/poussin/poussin.html>>.
5. Poussin, Nicholas. *Et in Arcadia Ego, No.2*. 1638. Louvre, Paris. 16 June 2007 <<http://www.abcgallery.com/P/poussin/poussin.html>>.

INTRODUCTION

1. TOM STOPPARD'S LIFE AND WORKS:

Born in Zlin, Czechoslovakia, on 3 July 1937, Tom Stoppard, whose real name is Tomas Straussler, has Czech and Jewish origins. His father, a company doctor, worked for the international Bata shoe company, but when the Nazi invasion threatened the country on the eve of World War II, the Straussler family was transferred to Singapore. Stoppard then was only two. Three years later, the family had to move again, this time to India, before the Japanese invasion of Singapore during which Stoppard's father who remained behind would be killed. Stoppard attended an English school in Darjeeling. In 1946, his mother remarried an army major, Kenneth Stoppard, and the family moved to England assuming the surname "Stoppard" (Bigsby 4). He attended Dolphin Preparatory School in Nottinghamshire, and then a boarding grammar school, the Pocklington School in Yorkshire. After leaving school at the age of seventeen, saying that he was "thoroughly bored by the idea of anything intellectual" and bored by reading Greek and Latin classics, as well as Shakespeare and Dickens, he began his career as a journalist on the *Western Daily Press* in Bristol in 1952 (Rusinko "Tom" 69). In those days, when the British and the French went into Suez and the Russians went into Budapest, he was ambitious to become a war journalist "lying on the floor of an African airport while machine-gun bullets zoomed over his typewriter" (Bradshaw 91). However, he was never good at journalism to go to Fleet Street; in fact, he was turned down for not knowing the name of the current Home Secretary (Bradshaw 91). In 1958, he switched to the *Evening World* where he worked as a second-string theatre critic and wrote the weekly film review column for a few months (Brassell 4). It was during this time that his interest in the theatre arose.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the influential "Angry Young Man Movement" of John Osborne encouraged many young people to write plays, as Stoppard, one of these young writers, expresses in the following words: "After 1956 everybody my age who wanted to write, wanted to write plays – after Osborne and the rest of the Court" (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 54). He states why he continued

his career as a playwright saying, “I became a playwright almost as the result of a historical accident. I began writing during a period when young writers in England wanted to be playwrights. In the late fifties, the playwright was the hottest thing in town” (qtd. in Bradshaw 94).

Joan Dean attributes Tom Stoppard’s “inclination towards parody”(6) in his writings to his journalism, which is, in fact, quite justifiable for Stoppard gradually developed his writing from his earliest days as a journalist and play reviewer. In 1960, he quit working as a journalist in order to start a literary career. And “[he] was working in a sort of panic” because then he was 23, and he saw that he had not done anything he had intended to do by that age (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 54). As a result, he wrote a television play, *A Walk on the Water* (1963), in three months. The play, which was bought by a television company in 1963, started Stoppard’s public career as a playwright. In 1974, in an interview, Stoppard admits that “[t]he first play tends to be the sum of the plays you have seen of a type you can emulate technically and have admired” and adds it is, in reality, “*Flowering Death of a Salesman*”, to put it differently, it is a combination of Robert Bolt’s *Flowering Cherry* (1958) and Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* (1949) (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 55). But, with a certain amount of embarrassment, he also confesses as follows: “it’s actually a phoney because it is a play written about other people’s characters” (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 56). Stoppard’s expressions are rather controversial: he considers such borrowings as “phoney” and still continues to use characters and plots borrowed from other sources in his later plays. Later in 1968, *A Walk on the Water* was staged under a new title, that is, *Enter a Free Man*. The play revolves around the protagonist George Riley, an imaginative man, who devotes himself to several inventions, though his wife and daughters at home do not appreciate him. Resisting all the bias and social pressures, he becomes a “free man” only in the local pub where he boasts of his latest inventions. However, his inventions are flawed; what is more, his heroism in refusing the unemployment compensation – he assumes himself as an employed inventor – results in both his wife’s and daughters’ need to work at hard jobs. While ridiculing a naive character, the play highlights the opposition between reality and appearance, showing an individual’s strong resistance to the norms of society. With his inability to become an

important person in his environment or with his failure in solving the problems, the character George Riley is a predecessor to Stoppard's following characters (Hu 15; Brater 118).

During this period, Stoppard also wrote a one-act play, *The Gamblers* (1965), which was first performed by the Bristol University students, a performance he compares to "*Waiting for Godot* in the death cell - prisoner and jailer" (qtd. in Tynan 60). Late in 1962, he moved from Bristol to London and reviewed many plays for the *Scene* magazine – he reviewed 132 plays within eight months – under the pseudonym William Boot, a character from Evelyn Waugh's novel *Scoop* (1937) also appearing in some of Stoppard's works such as *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (1964) and *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968) (Rusinko "Tom" 68). So his career as a theatre reviewer might be a justification for the intertextual diversity in his theatre.

In his early years, Stoppard tried his hand at producing non-dramatic works as well. He wrote three short stories and a novel, *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon* (1966), apart from plays. These short stories, which were published in the anthology, *Introduction 2: Stories by New Writers* in 1964, not only present semi-autobiographical subjects but also comprise the origins of some of his plays. Additionally, two of them deal superficially with the principles of journalism. "The Story," for instance, focuses on how the headlines on the newspapers can easily control people's lives. In the short story, spreading news about a court inquiry on a teacher's relation with a young girl results in the teacher's suicide. Stoppard, here, simply presents the situation in terms of journalistic responsibility. Late in 1965, this short story was adapted for television as *A Paragraph for Mr Blake*. "Life, Times, Fragments," the second short story, deals with the principles of journalism but differs from the other two with its humour. It is about the comic life fragments of a journalist who wants to become a famous writer. Some of the fragments come from Stoppard's own life; for instance, the journalist's failure to get a job at a newspaper, the *Evening Standard*, for not knowing the name of the Foreign Secretary, is actually what once happened to Stoppard himself (Brassell 10). The third short story, "Reunion" presents the pathetic hardships of reunion. In it, a man's attempts to return to his former lover result in failure as the woman rejects him. This short story

is the first and the only serious treatment of love Stoppard has published before *The Real Thing* (1982) (Kelly 22). Therefore, it may well be asserted that in Stoppard's writing career, these short stories foreshadow some of his later plays though they have some weak points in comparison to the well-developed stage plays.

In his early years, Stoppard also wrote a great number of radio and television plays, including two short fifteen-minute radio plays, that is '*M' is for Moon and Other Thing* (1964), a radio play about a couple counting events and characters starting with the letter "M" such as Marilyn Monroe's death, and *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (1964) which is about a young man, Dominic Boot, travelling around the town in a taxi in order to find the money to pay off the running taximeter and ending up unemployed, unengaged. Stoppard wrote three television plays between 1964 and 1967. These are his early spy-thriller *Neutral Ground* (1968), written in 1965, and two comedies for BBC 2's Thirty-Minute Theatre in 1967, that is *Teeth*, the story of a dentist who discovers that he has his wife's lover in his dental chair and the story of his revenge (Nilsen 488) and *Another Moon Called Earth* which is regarded as the genesis of *Jumpers* (1972) (Brassell 68).

Another Moon Called Earth centers around a workaholic historian, Bone, who is working on a thesis supporting the idea that nothing happens at random, and Penelope, Bone's voluptuous wife, who receives a close treatment from her doctor, Albert, since she becomes mentally unbalanced on the day man landed on the moon. Located in Penelope's bedroom, the play presents her withdrawal from the world consequent upon her belief that man's landing on the moon is dangerous. Penelope's doctor is better at having a close relationship with her than her workaholic husband. At the same time, though she feels no guilt, Penelope has some responsibility for the death of her maid, and the doctor covers up the murder in order to protect her from the law. The motifs – a workaholic husband and his voluptuous wife having an affair with another man, a whodunnit story and a corpse – observed in this early play will later be developed in *Jumpers* (Page 23; Jenkins *Theatre* 73).

Neutral Ground, a one-hour screenplay, is a metamorphosis of Sophocles' version of the classical myth of Philoctetes into the modern story of an agent, Philo, who, devoid of a hometown, travels East and West. As a spy, having travelled countries without a real identity during all his life, Philo fears losing his own identity. Seeking reality among appearances is a familiar motif of Stoppard's drama. Actually, he would eventually deal with a similar motif in detail, that is, the loss of identity, in a radio play, *The Dog It Was Died* (1982), and the spy-thriller *Hapgood* (1988) (Kelly 152). John Russell Taylor criticises Stoppard's early thriller *Neutral Ground* for not having "the advantage of personal subject-matter or angle of vision" and claims that "it was just a routine addition to the cycle of down beat, John Le Carre-type spy dramas" ("TV Drama" 12).

The best known among the other early plays are *A Separate Peace* (1966), *If You're Glad, I'll Be Frank* (1966) and *Albert's Bridge* (1967). In *A Separate Peace*, a play for television, the main character, John Brown, enters a private nursing home in search of a comfortable secure place though he is a healthy man. However, the staff at the hospital become suspicious of him and secretly investigate his past. The play contains a number of humorous dialogues about not being ill (Page 12; Kelly 44).

If You're Glad, I'll Be Frank, a radio play, is concerned with people in nonsensical jobs such as the central character Gladys Jenkins, a woman giving voice to the Government Printing Office, in other words, the G.P.O. speaking clock, and her husband Frank, a bus driver, who recognises his long-lost wife's voice on the speaking clock and attempts to set her free from her mechanic job, whenever he passes the G.P.O. building without falling behind his schedule. The play is more mature than *A Separate Peace* in many ways. The stream of Gladys's thoughts in free verse takes up more than half of the play, relating themes like the dehumanisation and alienation of a detached woman who is in charge of checking time without any break. Similarly, Frank's determination to keep his bus schedules is a satire on the obsession with time keeping (Brassell 81). Nevertheless, despite the fact that the motifs of dehumanisation and alienation are seen in most of the dramatic movements of post-war drama, Stoppard's approach to them is humorous. As

John Russell Taylor, in *The Second Wave*, suggests, in *If You're Glad, I'll Be Frank*, "Stoppard first establishes a successful style wholly his own" (99).

Albert's Bridge, a radio play dealing with the satisfaction man takes from his work, is about a painter, Albert, who delights in spending much of his time up on the bridge, away from his family. He is employed as the single painter, and this inevitably increases the non-communication in his life. His admiration of the bridge as a whole thing "separate-complete-removed, defined by principles of engineering" (Bigsby 7) turns into such a great obsession that in his detachment on the bridge, he utters popular songs and poems. However, Albert's happy life on the bridge comes to an end when the Bridge Committee employs 1800 painters to paint the rest of the bridge in a single day. Finally, as the army of painters marches onto it, the bridge collapses taking both the army and Albert down with it (Brassell 88). In the play, the disparity between illusion and reality, revealed through Albert's dream world on the bridge and the real world of the Bridge Committee members and Albert's family, and man's incapability to control his life against external forces are once again interwoven together.

The year 1966 was a turning point for Stoppard's literary career as a playwright. That year his most famous play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966) was performed by Oxford Theatre Group at Edinburgh Festival, and within the same week his only novel *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon* was published. On the eve of his literary career, Stoppard believed that his reputation would be made by his novel, and that "the play would be of little consequence" (qtd. in Bradshaw 93). However, *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon* brought him less success than his play; it sold only 688 copies at the time (qtd. in Bradshaw 94). On the other hand, as Brassell remarks, within a decade the play had "more than 250 productions in 20 different languages and grossed 'well over £ 300.000' for its author" (6). The great public attention paid to *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* turned Stoppard into an acclaimed figure as the playwright of "the most brilliant dramatic début of the sixties since Arden" (Bryden 69), as well as the youngest playwright ever to be staged at the National Theatre (Dodd 12). So, his reputation as a dramatist who thinks "writing dialogues is the only respectable way of

contradicting [him]self” (qtd. in Gussow “Stoppard” 31) came much more to the fore than his reputation as a novelist.

Before focusing on *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, it would be better to take a quick glance at Stoppard’s only novel so far, *Lord Malquist and Mr Moon*. The novel embodies Stoppard’s typical treatment of a number of serious matters blended with the humorous use of bizarre characters and events within a complicated plot. The anachronistic character of the play, Lord Malquist living in contemporary London, is at the heart of parody with his connection to the hired biographer, Mr. Moon, who is offended by his wife’s infidelity, as Moon’s wife, nicknamed “Fertility Jane,” has got a number of lovers including Lord Malquist and two cowboys. As another of Stoppard’s obsessed characters, Mr Moon feels insecure due to his wife’s lovers and carries a home-made bomb in his pocket. One day, when Moon meets up with the two cowboys, the lovers of his wife, his bomb explodes, but it just inflates a huge balloon with an obscene message written on it. Nevertheless, in the end, when he borrows Malquist’s coach, he is mistakenly blown up by a real bomb thrown by the husband of a woman who is run down by Malquist’s coach at the beginning of the novel (Brassell 12). All the eccentric events and accounts of death and destruction in the novel are conveyed through frivolity; therefore, it is conspicuous that even though the novel is unique among Stoppard’s literary works, it displays a playful approach to seriousness via a humorous witty style.

In his first major play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard borrows two insignificant characters, that is Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (1599-1600?) and makes them the leading characters of the play, abbreviating their names as Ros and Guil like Samuel Beckett’s Gogo and Didi in *Waiting for Godot* (1953). The play centers on these two Shakespearean and at the same time Beckettian characters who are uncertain of their identities and who spend their time talking, meeting people, tossing up coins and playing word games which reflects the absurd view of existentialism.

The play first appeared in a drama colloquium in West Berlin in 1964 as a “one-act Shakespearean pastiche in blank verse” (Bigsby 10) with the title *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear* and was performed by a group of amateurs (Hu 29). Stoppard identified this early “burlesque Shakespeare farce” as “bad” (Brassell 36) and re-composed it as *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by changing the speeches from verse to prose, incorporating some passages from *Hamlet* and shifting the setting from King Lear’s England to Hamlet’s Denmark (Hu 29).

Stoppard’s interest in these two secondary figures started due to a friend of him who suggested a comedy about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in England, adding that the King of England could be King Lear. Stoppard explains the reason why he is interested in these two minor characters who are even excluded in some *Hamlet* productions:

The chief object and objective was to exploit a situation which seemed to me to have enormous dramatic and comic potential—of these two guys who in Shakespeare’s context don’t really know what they are doing. The little they are told is mainly lies, and there’s no reason to suppose that they ever find out why they are killed. (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 57)

In another interview, he reveals why the characters appealed to him:

They end up dead without really, as far as any were privy to Claudius’ plot is entirely gratuitous. As far as their involvement in Shakespeare’s text is concerned they are told very little about what is going on and much of what they are told isn’t true. So I see them much more clearly as a couple of bewildered innocents rather than a couple of henchmen, which is the usual way they are depicted in productions of *Hamlet*. (qtd. in Gordon 18)

In the play, Stoppard’s chief intention is to explore the nature of two dramatic characters who are confined in a world which is controlled by external forces. Moreover, the unfortunate Ros and Guil are discerned to be entrapped as off-stage characters of *Hamlet* who spend their time talking and playing games, within the controlling plot of *Hamlet*. As Levenson claims, “the focus becomes minor characters and incidents and action that had taken place off-stage” (435). On the same issue, Brassell remarks: “all three acts of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* alternate between the characters’ ‘on-stage’ and ‘off-stage’ selves” (39). Stoppard directly incorporates some major passages from *Hamlet* in which the characters appear “on-

stage” and creates the longer “off-stage” sections, showing Ros and Guil as left alone generally to comprehend the “on-stage” episodes and to spend their time asking questions about life, betting on toss of a coin and playing question-games (Brassell 39). Thus, their incapability to control their lives and their unawareness of their inevitable fate is what Stoppard intends to demonstrate.

After the life-changing success of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard’s attention moves towards writing for stage in order to hear the laughter of the audience in the theatre, and he does not write anything for television between *Neutral Ground*, written in 1965, and *The Boundary* (1975) (Brassell 92). In relation to this, he states: “I’d rather write for the stage than television [. . .] because in a theatre one has the full attention of one’s audience, whereas while watching television one tends to glance at the newspaper” (qtd. in Bradshaw 94).

His following stage play is *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968) which he wrote in Bristol in 1967 after *The Gamblers*. In this one-act play, two second-string drama critics, Birdboot and Moon, are reviewing a whodunnit – a parody of Agatha Christie’s thrillers like *The Mousetrap* (1952) – in a country house with mysterious guests and with an unexplained corpse hidden under a sofa. The critics are totally opposite characters: while Birdboot works for a popular paper, Moon writes for a quality paper (Bigsby 17). Moon also delights in boasting of his intellectualism by using foreign words and wants to be in the position of his senior critic Higgs, the paper’s first-string critic. Unlike Moon, Birdboot is a kind of critic who spent the previous evening together with the actress playing Felicity. Yet their fates are the same; while watching the thriller, they are one by one drawn to the stage – first Birdboot is trapped in the play when he steps onto the stage to answer his wife’s call on the phone. Finding himself in the role of Simon, a character in the thriller, Birdboot no sooner realises that the corpse is, in reality, Higgs, and then Birdboot, too, is shot. Seeing his colleague’s lying body, subsequently, Moon rushes onto the stage finding himself in the role of Inspector Hound. However, he is also shot by another character, Magnus, who is actually Puckeridge, Moon’s junior critic. In the end, both critics and Higgs lie dead, and Puckeridge rises to the position of top critic. In a similar way to *Rosencrantz and*

Guildenstern are Dead, the play not only perfectly includes the play-within-the-play device, but also displays two ridiculous characters, like Ros and Guil, who are confined in a play, and for whom fate prepares a sudden death – this time at the hands of an ambitious third-string critic. Opening with a huge mirror as a backdrop which theatricalises “the deceptive metaphor of the theatre as mirror” (Boireau 144), gives an opportunity to the audience to watch both the thriller and the critics, and breaks up the aesthetic distance, and ending with the revelation of the disguised characters, the complicated plot of the play is a justification of Stoppard’s ingenious craftsmanship.

Two years later, in 1970, *After Magritte* is first performed in a West India restaurant by Ed Berman’s Ambiance Lunch-Hour Theatre Club (Brassell 92). This is a one-act play which is put on stage together with *The Real Inspector Hound*. Stoppard defines both plays as “an attempt to bring off a sort of comic coup in pure mechanistic terms” (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 60). For Brassell, “in each play, a puzzle of some kind is set up, and the discovery of its solution involves its characters and audience alike” (93). Like *The Real Inspector Hound*, *After Magritte* also explores the major conflict between appearance and reality by displaying humorous events and dialogues.

The opening tableau of *After Magritte* with characters who remain frozen for several seconds – like Thelma Harris crawling onto the floor looking for a sewing needle, her husband Reginald Harris naked to waist wearing fishing waders over his evening dress trousers, the mother lying on the ironing board wearing a black bathing cap, and the police inspector Foot looking through the window – generates confusion just like a detective story. The logical explanation to the bizarre opening of the play in Harris’ living room comes later on in the course of the play: Inspector Foot is there to investigate a strange man observed in Ponsonby Place one morning with irrelevant descriptions like a blind, one legged man in pyjamas carrying a tortoise, a footballer with shaving foam on his face, and an escaped prisoner with a handbag and cricket bat playing hopscotch (Brassell 102). After their attendance at an exhibition of René Magritte’s (1898-1967), a surrealist painter’s paintings, the family members attempt to find a logical answer to the appearance of the bizarre man by discussing about him with references to surrealist ideas which are completely irrelevant and incongruous.

Surprisingly, the strange man turns out to be Inspector Foot himself who, with shaving foam on his face and with both legs inside one pyjama leg, hopped out onto the street with his wife's handbag and parasol to put a coin in the parking meter outside his house before the wardens come round. Indeed, the play, Stoppard states,

was based on the fact for a start – somebody I know had a couple of peacocks in the garden, and one escaped while he was shaving. He chased it and he had to cross a main road to catch it, and he was standing in his pyjamas with shaving cream on his face holding a peacock when the traffic started going by. (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 71)

The starting point of the play endorses the idea that “there is obviously a perfectly logical explanation for everything” as one of the characters in the play, Reginald Harris, remarks (Stoppard *After* 90). Stoppard's aim here is to highlight “the discrepancy between the bizarre, surrealistic appearance and the mundane and trivial causality behind it” (Scolnicov 28). His focus on the misleading visual perceptions parallels with his deliberate choice of using allusions to Magritte, from whom the title derives and whose own examination of appearance and reality is typified by his picture of a pipe labelled in French “Ceci n'est pas une pipe” meaning “This is not a pipe” (Brassell 106).



Fig. 1. René Magritte, *This is not a Pipe*. 1928-29. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. 16 June 2007 <www.artinthepicture.com/paintings/view/php?nr=141>.

The questioning of the relationship between word and icon, the verbal art and the visual art in Magritte's paintings corresponds with Stoppard's intention in the play. According to Scolnicov, "[t]he play transliterates Magritte's unique language of surrealistic images into the theatrical medium, and uses this transliteration to comment on Magritte's ideas about the relation between the reality and its representation, the object and its name, the icon and the word" (26).

On the same issue, Jenkins, in the foreword to *The Theatre of Tom Stoppard*, deduces that in Stoppard's plays, the "fascination with the words and images convey meaning, connecting thought to speech or title to picture, [and] shows Stoppard's temperamental affinity with Wittgenstein and Magritte" (x). Accordingly, *After Magritte* is most associated with Magritte's *The Menaced Assassin* (1926) since both works present mystery. Some critics also recognise several similarities between the opening tableau of Stoppard's play and Magritte's painting such as the woman lying in the centre of the room, the wind-up gramophone with an old-fashioned horn, the observer or observers peering through a window and the black bowler hat (Scolnicov 24; Jenkins *Theatre* 55; Kelly 87).



Fig. 2. René Magritte, *The Menaced Assassin*. 1927. Museum of Mod. Art, New York. 16 June 2007 <www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:The_Menaced_Assassin.jpg>.

Stoppard's use of Magritte's paintings also evidences the apparent intertextuality and thus the intellectuality of the play. However, the writer's intention is not to sophisticate the issue, but just to arise a sense of humour, just like Magritte does through his paintings which arise a sense of humour in him (Kuurman 56). Accordingly, he states that the play is "not an intellectual play, it's a nuts-and-bolts comedy" (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 59).

In 1970, Stoppard's other plays were broadcast: *The Engagement*, a television film expanded from the radio play *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*, and *Where Are They Now?*, a radio play about an Old Boys' school reunion with all the memories of the boys' boarding school days, going backward in time to a school dinner in 1945 and going forward to 1969. In the past, the school boys were nicknamed Groucho, Chico and Harpo; now they are Marks, Brindley and Gale. Yet after all these years there is some confusion over who had what nickname ("Where"). In fact, the old boys' recollections about the past are blurred and ambiguous. *Where Are They Now?* is the first play in which Stoppard utilises flashbacks, and it prefigures the narrative structure of his next radio play, *Artist Descending a Staircase* (1972), and also the famous stage play, *Travesties* (1974) (Kelly 38).

Artist Descending a Staircase (1972), a radio play, is concerned with three avant-garde artists called Donner, Beauchamp and Martello, living at the top of a house, and a blind woman called Sophie. The play starts with Donner's falling heavily down the stairs. Discovering Donner's dead body at the bottom of the stairs, Beauchamp and Martello investigate the sudden death of their friends by listening to an audiotape which has recorded the final minutes of Donner. While they are trying to find out the true nature of the sounds on the tape, Stoppard presents a series of flashbacks going backward and forward in time, informing their close friendships since boyhood and their affection towards Sophie who killed herself by jumping through a window. Throughout the play some unknown facts are revealed: Sophie fell in love with Beauchamp while Donner loved her the most, and his unrequited love has not ended yet; and before falling down the stairs, Donner began to paint a portrait of Sophie. At the end of the play, it becomes

clear that Donner's sudden death is not a murder or suicide, but merely an accidental death which makes Beauchamp and Martello's suspicious investigations ridiculous.

The title of *Artist Descending a Staircase* derives from Marcel Duchamp's, an *avant-garde* artist close to the Dadaists and the Surrealists, series of paintings called "Nude Descending a Staircase" (1912) in which a female nude descends in a blurred series from the upper left of the canvas to the lower right (Hu 117).



Fig. 3. Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. 1912. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. 16 June 2007 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Duchamp>.

Hu claims that Donner's descent in the play provides a parody of the painting (117); however, Stoppard makes it clear that other than the title, he does not go into Duchamp too much (Maychick 232). The play has some similarities both in style and theme to *Travesties* like the time shiftings and the common discussion of the role of the artist in

society. Beauchamp's words about the role of an artist, which are a reflection of Stoppard's own ideas, are nearly repeated by Carr in *Travesties*: "The artist is a lucky dog. That is all there is to say about him. In any community of a thousand souls there'll be nine hundred doing the work, ninety doing well, nine doing good, and one lucky dog painting or writing about the other nine hundred and ninety-nine" (144).

In the same year, Stoppard wrote one of his major plays, *Jumpers* (1972), the first play in which he particularly wants to "ask a question and try to answer it, or at any rate put the counter question" (Bigsby 19). *Jumpers* hinges around the contradictory philosophical debates between George Moore, a workaholic philosophy professor, who prepares for a symposium entitled "Man: Good, Bad or Indifferent" to prove the existence of God and absolute values, and his opponent Sir Archibald Jumper, a psychiatrist and the Vice-Chancellor of the University in which he and Moore work, who completely adheres to Logical Positivism, believing that metaphysics and God cannot be proved which makes them meaningless. It is clear that Stoppard's "question" and "the counter-question" have a great role in the play together with the inevitable parallel theme of disparity between appearance and reality. The title, "Jumpers," is a metaphor for the characters or philosophers who are engaged in a "philosophical activity" and who are "jumping to conclusions" (Gussow "*Jumpers*" 74), which also exemplifies Stoppard's basic aim to "embark on an endless leapfrog down the great moral issues" (qtd. in Gussow "Stoppard" 31).

The play, typical of Stoppard, opens with pyramid-building jumpers in a celebration party while man's first landing on the moon is screened in the background. Then, McDuncan Fee, one of the jumpers and the rival of the protagonist George Moore, is shot, and Inspector Bones comes to investigate the murder. The elements of a whodunnit, like in *The Real Inspector Hound* and *After Magritte*, are enriched when Dotty, George's wife and a famous singer, tries to hide the jumper's corpse in her bedroom. Eventually, she is rescued from being a suspect by the help of Sir Archibald Jumper with whom she has an affair. He gets rid of the corpse and also of the Inspector's investigation before attending George's symposium in order to oppose George by defending the philosophy of Logical Positivists. The ambiguous ending of the

play with the philosophers' open-ended debate and with the question of the murderer's identity, is congenial to Stoppard's intention of displaying questions without answers. This play of ideas embodies several characteristics of Stoppard's theatre such as an ambushing opening, a whodunnit story, a troublesome corpse, an unfaithful wife, a workaholic professor, endless debates on contradictory views and allusiveness. In *Jumpers*, Stoppard also parodies a real life figure G.E. Moore, a twentieth century British philosopher, and his philosophical work *Principia Ethica* (1903), in addition to Sir Alfred Ayer, a logical positivist from Oxford University and the writer of *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936), and Dorothy Moore, a popular English singer (Cohn 115).

Two years later, in 1974, another major play by Stoppard, *Travesties* which would win successive awards in 1974 and 1975, is put on stage. This new play has some affinities with its predecessor. According to Stoppard,

[t]here are many senses in which *Travesties* is a great advance on *Jumpers*, but it's the same kind of pig's breakfast, and were I to do it a third time it would be bore. You start with a prologue which is slightly strange. Then you have an interminable monologue which is rather funny. Then you have scenes. Then you end up with another monologue, and you have unexpected bits of music and dance, and at the same time people are playing ping-pong with various intellectual arguments. (qtd. in Hayman "Intellectual" 58)

The play *travesties* real life characters such as the Dadaist poet, Tristan Tzara, the modernist writer, James Joyce, the communist leader, Vladimir Ulyanov Lenin, and a minor British consular official Henry Carr, as well as fictitious women characters like Cecily and Gwendolen – abbreviated as Gwen by Stoppard – portrayed in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). Each of the historical and fictional characters provide the play with its main themes which will be discussed and analysed in detail in the second chapter of this thesis. Nevertheless, a brief outlook to the play is given below, so as to compare the play to Stoppard's other plays.

Travesties is a play of ideas with its constant debate on art and revolution carried out by the distinct views of Joyce's art for art's sake, Lenin's art for politics' sake, Tzara's Dadaist anti-art, and Carr's bourgeois art. On the one hand, Lenin insists on a political didactic art that should change society; on the other, Joyce conventionally supports that

art should be a product of craftsmanship – an idea with which Stoppard himself sympathises. According to the Dadaist Tzara, the most radical of all, art is neither a political output nor a craftsmanship but a product of random, meaningless expressions free from logic, coherence and all aesthetic traditional forms. Basically, throughout the play, each of the revolutionary characters, Lenin, Joyce and Tzara, is concerned with their own studies: Lenin studies one of his major works, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) and wishes to participate in the coming Russian Revolution; Joyce writes his masterpiece *Ulysses* (1922); Tzara, with his friends, determines the principles of Dadaism, a movement destructing and revolting against all the current and established means of expressions in art and culture. A critic, Tim Brassell, remarks that the characters' "individual lives and achievements serve chiefly as the pretext for a playfully disrespectful comedy" in which "Stoppard does not treat them historically" but "makes travesties" of them (137-38). Concerned with the themes of the role of the artist in society, unreliability of history and memory, and the relativity of truth, *Travesties* presents Stoppard's playful treatment of intellectuality.

A television play Stoppard collaborated with Clive Exton, *The Boundary*, was first broadcast in 1975. It is the funny story of two lexicographers, Bunyans and Johnson, and it employs common Stoppardian elements such as a body lying on the floor, a mysterious opening tableau, false assumptions, a reasonable explanation of bafflement and, of course, a series of word plays. The play starts with the lexicographers' entrance to their office with a broken window where mounds of paper cover everywhere. Shocked by this chaotic scene, they also discover that beneath the mounts of paper, Brenda, Johnson's wife and also their secretary is lying on the floor. While arranging the papers of the dictionary, both of them feel suspicious of each other as being Brenda's killer. During their conversation about Brenda's faults in their affairs, suddenly Brenda, having regained consciousness, rises and angrily defends herself. Yet she is struck by a cricket ball flying through the window for the second time and is killed. Humorous puns by the lexicographers and the unsolved mystery until the very end makes the play the most fruitful collaboration that the BBC chose to repeat (Brassell 172).

In 1976, Stoppard wrote *Dirty Linen* to keep his promise to his American friend, Ed Berman, the director of several of Stoppard's plays, for a play for the bicentennial celebrations of American independence; the play would also celebrate an American's – Ed Berman's – naturalisation. It is a one-act play incorporating with the short play *New-Found-Land* (1976) which is inserted in the middle of *Dirty Linen*. Both of them take place in the same setting, a Parliamentary Committee Room in the House of Commons. In *Dirty Linen*, a special committee of MPs meet to investigate the sexual affairs of a number of MPs with a mysterious woman according to the spreading news. Indeed, the mysterious woman is Miss Maddie Gotobed, the secretary to the committee, who has slept with five of the six members of the committee, and during the recess for the division bell, she will make it six of the six (Dean 86). Eventually, the committee members discover that all of them have had an affair with Maddie, and that she is the mysterious woman they are investigating. For Brassell, in *Dirty Linen*, Stoppard's intention is "to satirise the obsessive secrecy and hypocrisy to which this kind of situation gives rise" (229). It is clear that Stoppard also aims at drawing the border between the privacy of one's life, whether an MP's or an ordinary citizen's, and the principles of the press. From this outlook, as Dean suggests, it becomes possible to assert that *Dirty Linen* "foreshadows the journalistic practices and responsibilities in *Night and Day*" (86). On the other hand, Kelly claims that Stoppard never fully develops the question "centering on the conflict between the public's right to know how well its elected officials are performing their jobs and the officials' right to protect the privacy of their personal lives," but produces the play like "one of his 'nuts'n'bolts' comedies" (91). No matter what the critics state, the farcical scenes in which female underwear appears from drawers at the most inappropriate moments and MPs' hilarious reactions to these situations with witty language made the play the longest London run of any of Stoppard's plays: it had a run of four years (Brassell 223).

New-Found-Land is a parody about British Parliamentarians' discovery of the United States (Cohn 111). The parody revolves around two characters: Arthur, "a very junior Home Office Official," and Bernard, "a very senior Home Office Official" meeting to discuss Ed Berman's naturalisation. However, while Bernard, who is partly deaf, constantly recounts the story of how he won a bet from Lloyd George on Big Ben,

Arthur, is engaged in his own American dream. The opening of the play by interrupting *Dirty Linen* with the allusive words in Arthur's monologue, that is, "my America! . . . my new-found-land," is very typical of Stoppard, for here he alludes to John Donne's erotic poem "Elegy 19" entitled "To His Mistris Going To Bed." These allusive words link, both technically and thematically, link Maddie's sexual affairs in *Dirty Linen* to Arthur's romantic descriptions of American landscape in *New-Found-Land* (Kelly 94).

Though Stoppard begins his career with an apolitical approach to social issues, in the late seventies, he develops an interest in human rights and freedom of speech. *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (1977) is a distinguished political play since it displays the Soviet treatment of dissidents together with the motif of mistaken identity. Alexander Ivanov, the main character, is closed in a Soviet mental hospital for protesting the unfair arrest of his friends although he is not mentally ill. Coincidentally, a madman called Alexander Ivanov, who assumes himself to be an orchestra conductor, shares Ivanov's cell in the hospital which leads to a great confusion. Finally, to end the confusion over their identities, the psychiatrist deliberately mistakes the patients and releases both of them.

Another play of Stoppard, dealing with human rights and free expression, is *Professional Foul* (1977), in which Anderson, a professor of Ethics at Cambridge University, is to present a paper entitled "Ethical Fictions as Ethical Foundations" in Prague. In his hotel room, he is visited by one of his former students, Pavel Hollar, a Czech, who has written a doctoral thesis on the conflict between the rights of the individuals and the rights of the community. Since the thesis would be found unacceptable by the state authorities, Hollar asks the professor to pass it to England for foreign publication. While keeping the thesis, Anderson witnesses Hollar's arrest on currency smuggling charges and becomes determined to give a lecture on human rights at the conference rather than the theoretical paper he intended to present. At the end of the play, Anderson achieves to pass Hollar's thesis through the customs search at the airport and flies safely to England. In terms of setting, *Professional Foul* differs from Stoppard's previous television plays in which one or two domestic settings are used. *Professional Foul* employs a wide range of scenes taking place, for instance, in a hotel

room, in a conference hall, or in an aeroplane. The play also interlinks three synchronised events: the philosophical conference, the World Cup Soccer Match, and Hollar's arrest. Football has a special significance in this play as the title *Professional Foul* is a football term referring to an intentional foul which a footballer is committed to make in order to prevent a goal. The term enables Stoppard to focus on ethics, whether individual or social, both in football and politics. Hollar's arrest becomes a professional foul which is committed by the Czech authorities in order to silence his voice by laying false charges against him. Indeed, the play derives from Stoppard's personal experiences in the arrest of a famous Czech playwright, actor and journalist, Vaclav Havel, because of his participation in an attempt to deliver a document about human rights called Charter 77 to the Czech authorities. In an interview with Shulman, Stoppard explains why he is interested in the issue of human rights in Eastern Europe:

I'm as Czech as Czech can be [. . .] so you can see that with my desire to write something about human rights, the combination of my birth, my trip to Russia, my interest in Havel and his arrest, the appearance of Charter 77 were the linking threads that gave me the idea for *Professional Foul*. (111)

Night and Day (1978), another remarkable play of Stoppard, is set in an imaginary African country called Kambawe in the late 1970s. Kambawe has been in a political turmoil since its recently gained independence. Three journalists, that is George Guthrie, an experienced photographer, Dick Wagner, an ambitious reporter and Jacob Milne, the youngest and the best educated of them, arrive in the country to report an ongoing civil war. The setting is the house of an English businessman, Geoffrey Carson, and his wife Ruth. There, all the characters discuss human rights and free expression in terms of the principles of journalism. During these discussions, Stoppard also presents the conflict between "the arrogant Wagner and the idealistic Milne – and their consequences in darkness and light" (Karwowski 164). Stoppard's objective in *Night and Day* is not to deal with African politics, but to focus on the practises of journalism and the concept of free press. As suggested by Dean, *Night and Day* is the "continuation of the examination of the free speech and thought raised in *Professional Foul* and *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* with a principal difference that *Night and Day* considers the problem from the perspective of its existence in Britain rather than in communist countries" (87). So Stoppard's tendency towards underlining human rights continues

with *Night and Day*. The play is also significant in terms of its strong female protagonist, Ruth, who believes that because of governmental pressures, press is not really free to publish the truth (Dean 101).

Another allusive play, *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* (1979) includes two short plays partly linked with each other with Stoppard's use of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and Shakespeare's two famous tragedies. The first play, *Dogg's Hamlet*, is an amalgam of two short plays, that is to say, *Dogg's Our Pet* (1971) and *The (15 Minute) Dogg's Troupe Hamlet* (1976) which were commissioned for Ed Berman's community theatre, Dogg's Troupe. The former, which is actually an anagram of Berman's theatre, deals with the preparations of an opening ceremony in a school where a kind of coded language is spoken by students. The latter is an abbreviated version of the original *Hamlet* taking place in merely fifteen minutes and is written to be performed on top of double-decker buses (Gussow "Stoppard's" 133).

Dogg's Hamlet unites the two short plays as it opens with the former, *Dogg's Our Pet*, in which the schoolboys are presented as building a platform for the school ceremony with the intention of performing the latter play, the fifteen-minute Hamlet, on it. Unlike the former, the amalgam play is written in a completely different kind of language called "Dogg" language. Stoppard explains his interest in this invented language as follows: "the appeal to me consisted in the possibility of writing a play which had to teach the audience the language the play was written in" (qtd. in Hunter 98). Inspired by Ludwig Wittgenstein, the twentieth century philosopher who studies on the philosophy of language, and by his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), which questions the concept of language and its accepted meaning, Tom Stoppard creates "Dogg" language in order to experiment Wittgenstein's conception of language as a game (Scolnicov 30). In the play, Stoppard playfully changes words and their accepted meanings to Dogg language, in which the meaning is comprehended through the dramatic action and intonation. In relation to this, Scolnicov finds a parallelism between Stoppard and René Magritte, mentioned earlier: "what Magritte does with icons, Stoppard does with words wrenching them from their accepted 'meanings'" (31).

Stoppard's other Shakespearean play, *Cahoot's Macbeth*, is dedicated to a Czech playwright, Pavel Kohout, who, in fear of censorship, privately performs his shortened adaptation of *Macbeth* in Dogg language, in people's flats with a group of actors after the persecution of his group because of their involvement in Charter 77 movement defending human rights. By dramatising the story of Czech actors, Stoppard intertextualises both Shakespeare's play and Kohout's adaptation. Besides, the dramatisation of a performance by a group of actors is very reminiscent of Pirandello's play, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921). In a more serious tone than Dogg's *Hamlet*, *Cahoot's Macbeth* displays the fear and sense of menace felt in totalitarian regimes with the persistent interruptions of an Inspector who incessantly involves in the performance. Illustrating the repression on intellectuals and artists in totalitarian regimes, the play comes close to Stoppard's previous plays concerning politics like *Professional Foul* and *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*.

The Dog It Was That Died (1982) is another radio play that Stoppard wrote ten years after *Artist Descending a Staircase*. In this comic spy story, the protagonist Rupert Purvis is a double agent who attempts suicide by leaping off Chelsea Bridge. However, he accidentally falls onto a passing barge, breaking his legs and killing a dog which was on the deck at the time. Prior to the suicide attempt, he posts a scandalous letter full of accusations to his superior Giles Blair. After his unsuccessful attempt, Blair visits Purvis in a rest home and encounters mysterious doctors, nurses and patients "moving lawns, clambering into cupboards or pottering up stone staircases in search of belfry bats" (Brassell 258-59). In addition to the comic presentation of the bizarre characters and of the mysterious spy stories on the surface, as the serious matter of the play, Purvis' dilemma as a double agent belonging neither to West nor to East, is presented.

After handling a love affair in the early short story "Reunion," Tom Stoppard once again deals with love and art together in a conventional romantic comedy, *The Real Thing* (1984). The play not only questions conventional topics such as love, fidelity and adultery in relation to the marital dilemma of the characters, but also discusses on the arts of acting and playwrighting. It dramatises the love affairs of Henry Boot, a successful playwright, Annie, his second wife and also an actress, Charlotte, his first

wife, also an actress, Max, Charlotte's second husband and an actor, and Brodie, Annie's lover and the antagonist playwright.

In the play, Stoppard's familiar devices can be easily observed: the debate of ideas (on love), puns, parody, and the play-within-the-play. As for the intertextual quality of the play, the title comes from Henry James' short story *The Real Thing* (1892); the inner play, *The House of Cards*, alludes to Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879); and there are some readings and rehearsals from August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1888) and John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1631) all of which ambush the audience in Pirandellian style (Zeifman *Comedy* 222). For instance, at the outset, the play begins with a performance of the inner play which introduces an architect husband building a house from playing cards while waiting for his wife's return from a trip to Switzerland. However, having found her passport at home, the suspicious husband thinks that she is betraying him. In the next scene, the wife in the previous scene turns out to be Charlotte, talking about her role in the last night's performance with Henry, who is the playwright of the inner play. This kind of ambush deriving from the distinction between reality and artificiality has been previously displayed in many of Stoppard's plays like *The Real Inspector Hound*. Moreover, some scenes from the inner play and the outer play imitate one another, reinforcing the metadramatic quality. In *The Real Thing*, the inner play, *The House of Cards*, triggers the exploration of love between the characters, especially the one between the main couple, Henry and Annie in the outer play. It surprisingly connects with the triangular love affair between Henry, his first wife, Charlotte and his second wife, Annie with whom he falls in love and consequently leaves his first wife. In the play, all the characters from the theatre world seek reality through dramatic performances or rehearsals of the inner plays which nest within one another like the Russian dolls. Throughout his search for what the real thing is, Henry's ideas about marriage become unsteady and fall like the toppling of the house of cards in the inner play (Rusinko "Last" 19). Eventually, Henry who autobiographically reflects Stoppard, realises that "love" is the real thing in his marriage. Living in an illusionary world as actresses and playwrights, all the characters soon realise that their love is the real thing.

In 1984, Tom Stoppard also wrote a documentary drama for the television, *Squaring the Circle*, which simultaneously displays, on the one hand, the conflict between Poland's Solidarity Movement and Polish Communist Party, and on the other, the conflict between British and the American film producers with the narration of the film's creation process as a documentary (Kelly 60). Here, Stoppard creates two opposing characters: a narrator who tells the reader/audience about the events in first person and a witness who criticises the narrator (Kelly 61). Thus, it is no surprise that Stoppard once again benefits from contradictory opinions.

Another remarkable stage play of Tom Stoppard is *Hapgood* (1988), in which he portrays a real life figure, Isabel Florence Hapgood (1850-1928), a literary translator mainly from Russian, a foreign correspondent, editorial writer and reviewer. Appealed by her being a cultural link between East and West, Stoppard creates a fictional Hapgood, a British agent who may have also become a double agent working for the Soviets. In the play, Stoppard not only turns to the conventions of spy-thrillers seen in his previous plays *Neutral Ground* (1968) and *The Dog It Was That Died* (1982), but also benefits from the cultural distinctions between East and West like he did in his political plays *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (1977) and *Professional Foul* (1977).

The play opens with a map projected onto panels in which red lights plotting the route of a Russian agent moving through the London streets, and stop at a swimming bath (Jenkins *Critical* 165). In the next scene, Stoppard's familiar ambush emerges when the identical twin of the Russian agent also enters and exits the stage. Yet Stoppard is not satisfied with only a pair of twins and exploits the element of classical comedy with two more pairs of twins so as to boost the confusion within the spy game. However, whether these twins are real or imagined is open to question just like whether the agents are double agents working for both the British and the Russian. In *Tom Stoppard*, Delaney says:

Drawing a link between the ambiguities of human personality and the mysteries of the cosmos, suggesting a join between that which is random and that which is divinely ordered, between happenstance and goodness, the dualities of *Hapgood* embody dichotomies which permeate Stoppard's plays. (126)

The eternal debate of ideas (on art) in *Travesties* and (on philosophy) in *Jumpers* is continued on science in *Hapgood*. The play draws a parallel between the quantum mechanics and human duality as Stoppard remarks: “The trigger for the play was the notion that duality in particle physics had some sort of correspondence to duality in human personality” (qtd. in Delaney *Tom* 130). The twins and the double agents in the play become a metaphor for human duality, which amounts to saying that man can be this or that depending on his choices according to the principle of causality in metaphysics (Karwowski 165). In the play, Joseph Kerner, a scientist and an agent, who is fond of games, especially spy games and verbal games, compares the dualities of human nature to the nature of subatomic particles. Kerner is also in a dilemma as to where to belong between West and East, like Philo in *Neutral Ground* (Kelly 157).

In 1991, Tom Stoppard wrote a radio play for the BBC, *In the Native State*, which presents “the ethos of Empire in India” where he had spent four years as a child from 1942 to 1946 (Twisk 254). Indebted to E. M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924), Stoppard brings together English and Indian characters across two generations, particularly focusing on the interaction between English women and Indian men (Russell 2). The play deals with the story of Flora Crewe, an English poet and an independent woman who travels to India in 1930 for her health. There she meets an Indian artist, Nirad Das, who paints her portrait. After many years, in 1990, Nirad’s son, Anish, sees Flora’s portrait on the cover of an edition of her letters and meets her elderly sister, Eleanor, in London to show her Flora’s nude portrait which has been kept secret for all these years. By juxtaposing the present with the past and by using time shiftings, Stoppard draws attention to the differences between West and East, the conflict between the coloniser and the colonised in India, the cross-cultural differences in art and literature and the elusiveness of history. The play is later expanded for the stage in 1995 and entitled *Indian Ink*.

Stoppard’s next play, *Arcadia* (1993) alludes to Nicholas Poussin’s well-known series of paintings “Et in Arcadia Ego” (1627-38), which depict shepherds uncovering a tomb in a pastoral setting, implying that Death exists everywhere and finds man even in Arcadia, an ideal place (Hynes 653).



Fig. 4. Nicholas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego, No.1*. 1627. The Duke of Devonshire and the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees, Chatsworth. 16 June 2007 <<http://www.abcgallery.com/P/poussin/poussin.html>>.



Fig. 5. Nicholas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego, No.2*. 1638. Louvre, Paris. 16 June 2007 <<http://www.abcgallery.com/P/poussin/poussin.html>>.

The play draws its energy from this referential idea as well as from its introduction of miscellaneous subjects ranging from the fashionable designs in landscape gardening practiced in the nineteenth century to the misinterpretation of history and to the new discoveries in science. It displays scenes taking place both in the present and in the early years of the nineteenth century, in a single setting, a room of a country house, where the past and present characters are seen in turn. In the past, the inhabitants of the estate are occupied with some trivial matters like garden designing and the adulterous affairs of some of the characters, as well as some serious matters like the chaos theory and the relativity theory of Newton. In the present, besides the inhabitants of the estate, the visitors – a successful historian studying on the estates' gardening, and an unsuccessful literary scholar searching for some facts about Lord Byron – are also occupied with the same matters with a retrospective outlook (Smethurst and Kuehn "Arcadia"). Stoppard, in an interview, states that the play is about "literary detection [. . .] about people speculating about what happens [. . .] and in theory the fun is seeing how wrong they can be, because we've been there and they haven't" (qtd. in Goreau 259). Within this framework, the time shiftings in the play draw attention to the significance of *reading* history as it is easy to manipulate it. The literary scholar's wrong interpretation of history for fame can be evaluated as a satirical element in the play.

Actually, Stoppard's starting point in writing *Arcadia* is presenting the discrepancy between the classical gardening, that is "those who have particular respect for logic, geometry and pattern," and the romantic gardening, "those with a much more spontaneous, unstructured communion with nature" (Delaney *Tom* 262). In addition to the opposition of classical and romantic, the play also juxtaposes concepts of order and chaos. While an aristocratic character of the play, Lady Croom, adheres to the orderly Classicism, her genius daughter Thomasina is in favour of the irregular romantic garden architecture which supports her mathematical studies and her theory of the chaotic nature of the universe ("Smethurst and Kuehn"). Within this framework, a trivial thing – choosing a fashionable design for gardening – is turned out to be a significant event under the discussions about Classicism, Romanticism, and the chaos theory, as well as the discussions about issues the seriousness of which is neutralised by the aristocrats' trivial choices in gardening. So, the play justifies Stoppard's words: "Seriousness

compromised by my frivolity, or . . . frivolity redeemed by seriousness” (qtd. in Gussow “*Jumpers*” 73). The play’s ending with the combination of past and present is noteworthy as it illustrates the repetitiveness of time. In the final scene, the couples both in past and present start to waltz, a symbolic dance with its falls and rises standing for an eternal shift in chaos and order.

In 1997, Stoppard is knighted and becomes Sir Tom Stoppard. In the same year, with *The Invention of Love*, Tom Stoppard presents the accounts of the life story of A.E. Housman’s, an eminent poet, a classicist and the writer of *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) as well as a homosexual. Besides him, Stoppard peoples his play with well-known literary and historical figures like Oscar Wilde, Moses John Jackson, John Ruskin, Walter Pater, Benjamin Jowett, Jerome K. Jerome, Alfred William Polard and Frank Harris. Similar to his previous plays *Arcadia* and *Indian Ink*, *The Invention of Love* makes a comparison between “personal experience” and “hearsay evidence” in relation to love by presenting shifts in time, back and forth, to the earlier years and to 1936, the year Housman died (Karwowski 161). The play opens with the last night of the poet, when he dreams his deceased body is ferried on the river Styx across the underworld by the mythical boatman Charon, and on his journey to the underworld, he meets his young self with whom he discusses on poetry, classical education and most significantly, on love. With the apparition of young Housman, Stoppard presents the academic debates made particularly in the nineteenth century Oxford, struggling with John Ruskin’s esteem for the Gothic, Walter Pater’s appreciation of the Renaissance, and Benjamin Jowett’s thoughts about the classical education. Young Housman disappears from the play when his tender feelings are refused by the man he loves, and the attention completely shifts towards Housman, as an influential poet and significant scholar of his time. During that time, he meets Oscar Wilde, a homosexual writer of the Victorian age, and compares his choices in life with Wilde’s: Wilde remains decisive on his love for Lord Alfred Douglas for whom he prefers to live alone and broken; Housman, after the psychological dilemma on account of his unrequited homosexual love, becomes a successful poet and a scholar with a chair of Latin at Cambridge (“Ryan”). Even though Stoppard’s *The Invention of Love* is about A.E. Housman’s life, it specifically demonstrates man’s fundamental dilemma in making decisions. Stoppard, in this play,

intends to explore the moments of decisions in an individual's life through a retrospective journey. Within this context, Housman's choice of homosexual love lies at the heart of the play. Victorian moralities, literary and historical figures, classical poetry and mythological references are the minor elements when compared to this central concern with love.

In his trilogy of plays, *The Coast of Utopia* (2002), Stoppard again goes back in history, but this time he deals with the historical events and characters on the verge of the emergence of revolutionary ideas in the nineteenth century Russia. Stoppard's interest in historical facts and his search for new readings of history can be based on his own discoveries in his family history. As a biographer, Ira Nadel has argued in her article that Stoppard's recent realisation of his Jewish background may have led him to become suspicious about history, including his own family history (21). Whatever Stoppard's interest in writing *The Coast of Utopia* is, there is the undeniable fact that from his early writing career to his late years, from *Travesties* to *Indian Ink*, to *The Invention of Love* and to *The Coast of Utopia*, Tom Stoppard has always had a growing interest in writing about historical events and characters.

The Coast of Utopia consists of three individual plays: *Voyage*, *Shipwreck* and *Salvage*, generally focusing on the development of the revolutionary ideas in the nineteenth century Russia. The starting point for *Voyage*, the opening play of the trilogy, is the Decembrist Revolt of 1825, which was a reaction against the Tsar's censorship and undemocratic laws. It also presents a conventional Russian life in a wealthy estate, between the years 1833 and 1844. There in the estate, the rise of revolutionary ideas is chiefly carried out by an intellectual, Michael Bakunin, and his fellow visitors to the estate. These include Alexander Herzen who has got a dominant role in the other two plays, *Shipwreck* and *Salvage*; Ivan Turgenev, a remarkable novelist; Nicholas Stankevich, a young philosopher; Vissaron Belinsky, a literary critic who esteems art for a better society; and Alexander Pushkin, a Russian novelist. Beside the intellectual circle of revolutionary thinkers, the family affairs in the Bakunin estate are also on the foreground. The Bakunin family is a crowded Russian family in which the father

Alexander Bakunin is in search of wealthy husbands for his four daughters regarding marriage as a source of economic benefits.

The second play of the trilogy, *Shipwreck*, begins in Russia in 1846, a few years after the events in its predecessor *Voyage*. It presents the failure of all the utopic ideals for a better society, dealt with in the first play, due to the disappointing result of the 1848 revolutions in Europe. In *Shipwreck*, the chief character of the *Voyage*, Michael Bakunin, is in exile, and the dominant role is given to Alexander Herzen and his family who will shortly travel abroad for the health of their deaf son. Yet their expectations will soon collapse just like the disappointing European revolutions of 1848 as the family stays in exile, and Herzen's wife and son die.

In the last play of the trilogy, *Salvage*, Herzen still continues his efforts of changing the system, by printing a newspaper abroad. Meanwhile, he is also engaged in domestic arrangements for his motherless children after his wife's death. During this time, the play also employs a remarkable historical event occurring off-stage, that is the Emancipation of Russian Serfs ("Loveridge").

Tom Stoppard's latest play, *Rock'n'Roll* (2006) focuses on the social and political issues of democracy and free expression by presenting the repressive communist regime in Czechoslovakia, between the Soviet invasion of the Prague Spring in 1968 and the Velvet Revolution of 1989, when Vaclav Havel, a friend of Stoppard, became president. The play presents two contrasting worlds, that of a young Czech Ph.D. student at Cambridge, Jan, who is actually "a rock-loving non-combatant" ("Billington") believing in freedom and democracy, and that of an English Marxist academician at Cambridge, Max, who describes himself as "the last white rhino" ("Aesherson") believing in the communist ideal world. The play begins with Jan's return to Prague in 1968 and continues with his becoming a dissident at the heart of the communist regime which arrests a rock group, the Plastic People of the Universe in 1976, although the sole aim of the group is to play rock'n'roll music ("Edwards"). This event rocks everything and becomes a turning point leading to the reformation of human rights with the Charter 77 and to the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Indeed, in these political changes, the group had

no intentional role. Stoppard makes clear that they did not directly bring down communism (“Edwards”). As seen, Stoppard, in *Rock’n’Roll*, once again deals with the artistic dissent and human rights in Czechoslovakia, like he does in his previous plays *Doggs Hamlet*, *Cahoots Macbeth*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* and *Professional Foul*; however, this time he enriches his play with rock music, the music of resistance and freedom, from the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, the Velvet Underground, Syd Barrett and the Plastic People (“Spencer”).

In addition to his television, radio and stage plays, Tom Stoppard has also written many adaptations and film scripts. His stage adaptations include: Slawomir Mrozek’s *Tango* (1966), Federico Garcia Lorca’s *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1973), Arthur Schnitzler’s *Das Weite Land* adapted as *Undiscovered Country* (1979) and *Liebelei* as *Dalliance* (1986), Johann Nestroy’s *Einen Jux will er machen* as *On the Razzle* (1981), Ferenc Molnar’s *Play at the Castle* as *Rough Crossing* (1984) and Chekhov’s *The Seagull* (1997). His screen adaptations include: Thomas Wiseman’s *The Romantic Englishwoman* (1975) and Graham Greene’s *The Human Factor* (1980). Stoppard has also adapted Jerome K. Jerome’s *Three Men in a Boat* (1975) for television. Besides, he has written an English libretto for Sergei Prokofiev’s opera, *The Love of Three Oranges* (1983), and an English narration for Franz Lehar’s opera *The Merry Widow* (1993).

Stoppard generally re-writes the original sources of his adaptations which undergo a kind of transformation, especially in terms of the dialogue and the setting so as to modernise the original work. For instance, his *Rough Crossing* is an adaptation from *Play at the Castle* (1924) written by Ferenc Molnar, a successful Hungarian boulevard playwright who died in 1952 (O’Connor 173). The original play is a situation comedy about two co-authors, Turai and Gal, an actor, Ivor, an actress, Natasha and a composer, Adam who are rehearsing a two-hander for the boulevard. Yet in Stoppard’s play, they are rehearsing a musical for Broadway; moreover, Stoppard has also changed the setting from a feudal castle to on board an Atlantic liner called “The Italian Castle” (qtd. in O’Connor 173).

Tom Stoppard also wrote the film scripts of *Brazil* (1985), *Empire of the Sun* (1987), *The Russia House* (1990) *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1990), *Billy Bathgate* (1991), his Oscar-winning film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), *Vatel* (2000) which is first screened at the Cannes Film Festival, and *Enigma* (2001) which is first screened at the Sundance Film Festival. His latest filmscript is *The Bourne Ultimatum* (2007) in which he collaborates with Tony Gilroy, Scott Z. Burns and George Nolfi.

Tom Stoppard once said: “plays are the people who write them” (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 65). Similarly, his own life has inevitable reflections on his writing. Especially, as Ira Nadel in her article asserts, the theme of displacement and dislocation in his plays results from his early childhood experiences as a refugee in India and Singapore until his arrival in England in 1946 (21). Besides, Stoppard’s recent discovery of his Jewishness reinforces his distrust of history, as he believes that it is always incomplete. Actually, the playwright’s mother was not willing to disclose to him the religious history of the family, and thus the Jewishness of the family was not revealed until the visits of some of the Czech relatives in the 1990s and the eventual death of his mother in 1996 (21). It was during this time that he not only faced the facts in his own family history but also dealt with the theme of incompleteness of history in his late trilogy, *The Coast of Utopia*.

2. TOM STOPPARD'S STYLE AND INFLUENCES:

Starting his literary career in the 1960s, Tom Stoppard writes a great number of plays which have several affinities as well as differences. Although his style never changes, the content of his plays compromise various issues. In most of his plays, he deals with the themes of man's loss of control of his life, his ability to alter his destiny, the discrepancy between life and art, appearance and reality, the dualism of life and death, the relativity of truth and history, the importance of identity, and memory. In addition to these major themes, in his political plays, he concentrates on such issues as human rights, free expression, the principles of journalism, censorship and totalitarianism. His plays abound in many sophisticated debates on art, philosophy, metaphysics, politics, revolution, scientific and mathematical theories, history, music, sports and architecture designs which bring about a diversity in subject matter. However, it is essential to notice that the style is more significant than the content of the plays; the seriousness within all the miscellaneous themes is trivialised by Stoppard's craftsmanship.

In order not to underestimate the overwhelming intellectual quality of Stoppard's works, one should make an analysis of the underlying seriousness characterising these works. In Stoppard's plays, an explicit serious tone is hidden behind the profound philosophical, social and political issues which are problematised through the playwright's witty use of intertextuality. A great number of these plays have references to other works of art, or to historical, fictional or contemporary people, in addition to containing quotations and literal allusions to other writers' works. His plays require readings on the related texts and knowledge of allusive sources in advance because of their "deliberate reference to other works rather than to any realistically perceived 'world'" (Scolnicov 19). Regardless of the fact that his persistence in using intertextual references entails a sophisticated audience who can explore beyond the plays, it may be proclaimed that Stoppard is successful in achieving his aim: to present an intellectual entertainment for his audiences.

What is really noteworthy in Stoppard's theatre is the intertextual quality and diversity in his plays. His dramatic works compromise both inspiration from other writers and

direct allusions from other works of literature. As twentieth-century drama allows to make adaptations from classics, he does not hesitate to borrow some materials from classics within the plot structure of his plays like *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*. With the influence of T. S. Eliot's famous poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917) and E. M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India*, for instance, he has written *Indian Ink*. Indebted to the masterpieces of British drama, namely Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, and Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, he writes *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties*. His readings on various sources support his writings. He writes *Arcadia*, to illustrate, after reading the books of two garden architect, Humphrey Repton and Capability Brown, Byron's works, and James Gleick's – an author, journalist and a biographer whose books focus on the cultural changes of science and technology – *Chaos: Making a New Science* (1987) which is about the chaos theory (Berry "Arcadia"). Besides, the traits of *Philosophical Investigations* written by Ludwig Wittgenstein can be observed in *After Magritte* and *Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth* (Scolnicov 19).

In addition to intertextuality and allusiveness, it is essential to define some literary terms such as burlesque, parody, travesty and pastiche which are related to Stoppard's writings. First of all, the term "burlesque" refers to "an incongruous imitation"; that is, "it imitates the matter or manner of a serious literary work, but makes the imitation amusing by a ridiculous disparity between its form and style and its subject matter" (Abrams *Glossary* 18). Here, the point to be emphasised is the discrepancy between style and subject matter which can be achieved in two ways. There are two forms of burlesque: if an elevated style is used for a trivial or low subject matter, it is called "high burlesque," including the parody; if an undignified or low style is used for a serious matter, it is called "low burlesque," including the travesty (Abrams *Glossary* 18). To take obvious examples from Stoppard's plays, *The Real Inspector Hound* can be defined as a parody since it imitates the serious materials and manner of whodunnit stories together with the characteristic style of Agatha Christie's thrillers and applies these to a comically inappropriate subject, to be more specific, the rivalry among the theatre critics. As its title indicates, *Travesties* can be shown as an example to travesty,

which treats serious subjects in a jocular manner and style and ridicules the dignified lives and works of Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, Tristan Tzara and Vladimir Ulyanov Lenin.

Pastiche is also a closely related term to parody; however, there is a slight difference between them. In parody, especially in the twentieth century usage of the word, the elements, characters, or settings of a single work are lifted out of their context and reused ("Parody"). As for pastiche, the term describes a literary technique that imitates and combines a number of motifs, stories, styles or quotations from various works in order to create a new work ("Pastiche"). That is to say, a parody imitates one single work whereas a pastiche imitates more than one work. Therefore, it can be concluded that in Stoppard's theatre pastiche is more prevalent than parody.

Stoppard develops the plots of his plays whereby direct or indirect allusions, and this allusiveness, which is a kind of ambush for the reader/audience, serves to broaden one's comprehension on the subject matter. In *Jumpers*, Dotty expresses her feelings at her first encounter with George Prufrock with a line written by T. S. Eliot. In *Albert's Bridge*, Fraser speaks out words formerly uttered by W. B. Yeats. In *Artist Descending a Staircase*, the final scene ends with a reference to Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Gabbard 4). In *Travesties*, as another case in point, Tzara woes Gwen by the help of his own version of a Shakespearean sonnet, "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day." The allusiveness under consideration sometimes surprises, sometimes fills the audience with curiosity as to the course of events, as in the case of the allusive inner play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* which makes the reader/audience strongly wonder how the baffled couple will react to the situation.

In Stoppard's plays, there is also dramatic irony which occurs when the characters become aware of their inabilities, acknowledge their own limits and perceive the futility of attempting to change their destiny. In other words, it occurs when they realise that there is an already written destiny and that their actions are controlled by it. Previously written by other authors, in Stoppard's theatre, destiny presents an intertextual restriction to the characters. As William Babula states, "script is destiny" and for Ros

and Guil “destiny lies in the plot of an Elizabethan revenge tragedy” (280); the intertextual quality of most of Stoppard’s plays determines the element of destiny. Furthermore, intertextuality doubles the dramatic irony. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, the original textual source for allusion, *Hamlet*, embodies irony related to the character’s consciousness of their inability to alter their fate/human condition ending with death, and Stoppard’s play itself embodies irony as the characters and/or the audience are aware of the intertextuality.

Tom Stoppard makes use of several theatrical devices which constructs most of his plays. He composes metadramas, informing the audience that they are watching a fiction. Illustrating metadrama, there are plays-within-plays, dumbshows and rehearsals in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Dogg’s Hamlet*, *Cahoot’s Macbeth*, *The Real Thing*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, and *Travesties*. Stoppard’s plays also consist of long monologues or asides directly addressed to the audience. These techniques create an alienation effect.

Stoppard’s primary motivation in writing plays is to entertain people. To achieve this, he accentuates language with puns, and witty repartees; and action with theatricality. The theatricality occurs especially when magical illusions, a human pyramid of acrobats, or a striptease scene appears on stage. Moreover, most of his plays exemplify different kinds of game playing such as coin-tossing, betting, question and answer games, role-playing, spying and disguising. The openings of the plays also serve to ambush and entertain the audience: a human pyramid of acrobats in *Jumpers*, the building of a tower with play cards in *The Real Thing*, and the taking out of poetry/art from a hat in *Travesties*. The abrupt opening of his plays with distinguished theatrical illustrations is reminiscent of the fact that the subject matter in his plays is basically dramatic art/illusion.

Despite the humorous and witty style, the endings of Stoppard’s plays do not correspond to the Aristotelian definition of comedy, that is, a kind of drama coming to a close with a festive occasion. Nearly most of his plays are deprived of a happy end, and they introduce no resolution for the characters. The endings are ambiguous which makes

the audience leave the theatre with many question marks in their minds. Therefore, although Stoppard's plays are compared to Wilde's comedies in terms of witty style and to Shaw's comedies in terms of intellectual debates, they differ from these precedents with their uncertainty in the denouement. Indeed, throughout his plays, Stoppard introduces open-ended questions without giving their answers. Although he philosophises the subject matter in his plays, the aim of this endless questioning is not finding the truth or an answer. The arguments in the plays endorse that there is no definite truth which leads to the conclusive deduction of the relativity of truth.

The incessant talk and discussion is the chief characteristic of Stoppard's theatre. His plays are plays of ideas that deal with serious issues which inevitably appeal to the audience's intellect. In this aspect, Stoppard's plays are akin to George Bernard Shaw's "plays of ideas," or "intellectual drama." In Shaw's plays, the conflict and interest are particularly intellectual, rather than emotional. Against the rhetorical drama of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the drama of passions and sentiments, Shaw, the famous representative of "drama of ideas," aims to bring content back into British drama, since he thinks that a dramatist should deal with social issues. In fact, he writes his plays in a period (1890-1950) which was full of significant historical events, social and technological changes. According to Dietrich, drama of ideas prevailed as "in a contentious age, full of great battles between Victorian and modern ideas and between rival theories of modernism, a rhetorically passionate drama of ideas was a fitter vehicle for expressing the age" (19). Shaw's plays both reflect and reinforce the idea of change dominant in that period. In order to change minds, for Shaw, drama should embody intellectual conversations on social and political issues. According to him, "[d]rama is no more setting up the camera to nature, it is the presentation in parable of the conflict between Man's nature and his environment; in a word, of problem" ("Preface").

The basic element of Shavian drama is dialogue, not action. To Shaw, "[i]ncidents are less interesting than the motives that create them and the people involved in them" (*Our Theatres* 8). The playwright does not raise questions about the events; rather, he asks or philosophises the truth behind the events – that is, the values, attitudes, motives behind the deeds (Dukore 13). As the representative of intellectual drama in the second half of

the twentieth century, Tom Stoppard also seeks the truth behind the incidents; however, his manner and style is quite different. He brings a new understanding to this kind of drama. Like Shaw, he is engaged in the reasons or the realities of the events, and he puts forward several arguments about the events. However, in his search for the truth, unlike Shaw, Stoppard enriches his plays of ideas with a humorous witty style characterised by polished repartees, metaphors, and puns, intertextual borrowings, plagiarised plots, and allusive characters. The performance of acting and the incidences in Stoppard's plays embody an amusing theatricality which is excluded in Shaw's plays. Like Shaw, he puts emphasis on dialogue, ideas, the conflict between man and his universe; however, his dialogues are generally about the unresolved large issues of philosophy and metaphysics. Therefore, both dramatists' plays of ideas differ in the content. Shaw's plays are almost entirely the explorations of the moral and social problems of his age, and some of his plays are ideological attacks on the immoralities of society. In his plays, he defends women's rights, and demands the equality of income in society. In addition to all these, Shaw is a dedicated socialist, and a founding member of the Fabian Society, a middle class organisation established to promote the gradual spread of socialism by peaceful means ("George"). He is an activist writing many pamphlets and giving lectures on socialism. Therefore, as an advocate of the social responsibility of drama, in his plays, Shaw presents critical conversations about the social and political issues and the morals of the Victorian age.

The intellectual content of Shaw's plays is relevant to real life and real problems, as reflected in his question, "How can you give people intellectual satisfaction unless they recognise your problem as real and urgent?" (qtd. in Henderson "Self-Revealed" 437). When Shaw put forward this question, he most probably could not imagine Tom Stoppard's successful plays which would give intellectual satisfaction to the public a century later, without dealing with urgent problems of society. Except for Stoppard's few political plays, involving discussions on the human rights issue and the freedom of press, most of his plays chiefly focus on man's individual conflict with his environment. Unlike Shaw, he prefers to be detached from women's issues and the feminist approaches in British drama in the 1970s and 80s. Also, despite Stoppard's connection with some Czech intellectuals revolting against the repressions of communist regime in

Czechoslovakia and advocating freedom of expression and free press, his interest in politics is not overtly seen in the majority of his theatre writings.

As another matter of fact, according to Shaw, plays should essentially derive from real life rather than from dramatic or other literary sources (Henderson *His Life* 438). In this aspect, Shaw's esteem for realism in playwrighting directly conflicts with Stoppard's favor of imagination and probabilities of reality and history in playwrighting. In his plays, Stoppard not only resorts to literary allusions from other writer's works, but also reconstructs his own realism by either distorting and changing the allusive elements, or using them as in the originals. In addition to being plays of ideas, his plays also explore the borderlines between the real and unreal and/or surreal.

As a consequence, even though both dramatists produce plays of ideas, they differ from each other in many ways, both technically and thematically. For Brassell, "Shaw shares with Stoppard the idea that a play can be a vehicle for debating views on life, rather than a method of presenting slices of it, but his rhetorical instinct often seems stronger than his theatrical instinct" (134). Although both of them use a dialectic language to develop the arguments they present, Stoppard avoids Shaw's continuous and "straight" dialectic by "his various comic and theatrical subversions" (Hunter 96) and breaks the dialogue with interruptions. In fact, Stoppard's insistence on style makes his plays become richer than those of Shaw, who, for Harold Bloom, "has no style to speak of" (2). Stoppard's general playwrighting combines a variety of motifs, genres and techniques of literature. While most of his plays are pastiches of the works of many writers, especially Shaw, Wilde, Brecht, Beckett, Shakespeare, Pirandello, Eliot and Joyce, they are also evidences of these writers' influences over Stoppard.

Probably Oscar Wilde, who adheres to style, can be considered a more direct source of inspiration for Stoppard. Stoppard shares Wilde's idea of art for art's sake and locates the witty dialogues, wordplays, and parodies at the heart of his plays. His overt borrowing from Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, for example, is manifest in the construction of *Travesties*; moreover, as Tynan claims, the genesis of *Rosencrantz*

and Guildenstern are Dead appears to have been derived from Wilde's ideas about Shakespeare's courtiers in *De Profundis* (1905) (Dean 7).

In British drama, in wide terms, the profound influence of post-war dramatists such as Brecht, Beckett and Osborne on the newly flourishing, young dramatists of the 1960s and 70s, like Tom Stoppard, cannot be underestimated. These *avant-garde* dramatists of the post-war period are strictly determined to shatter and collapse all the familiar theatrical conventions, both technical and thematic, with their radical attacks on naturalism. Like them, Stoppard has seen no drawback in pulling down the fourth wall of the theatrical performances, which traditionally divides the audience from the dramatic action taking place onstage, in his major plays like *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *The Real Inspector Hound*. Although Stoppard has been, to a certain extent, indebted to the *avant-garde* dramatists in constructing his plays, he considers himself "a conservative in politics, literature, education, and theatre" (qtd. in Gussow "Stoppard's" 129). No matter which *avant-garde* techniques he has used, he completely depends on writing in a dramatic tradition.

The influence of Brecht on Stoppard is not so direct as on John Arden or Edward Bond. Yet it is still noticeable in terms of the "alienation effect" or the "A-effect" (in German, *Verfremdungseffekt*) of Brechtian or epic theatre. In epic theatre, German dramatist, Bertolt Brecht aims to destroy the theatrical illusion of Aristotelian drama which allures the audience into a trance-like state bringing out *catharsis*, the purging of the feelings of pity and fear. As opposed to Aristotelian drama, the intention of epic theatre is to achieve a kind of critical detachment with an emphasis on logic rather than passion and emotion. That is to say, it forces the audience to distance themselves from the characters on the stage, contemplate about the events, and be ready for social action (Wright 25-27). Brecht's alienation effect centers on encouraging the audience to approach the events on stage in a more critical way; it discourages them from identifying with the characters and from an emotional *catharsis*. According to Brecht, "(a)lienating an event or character means first of all stripping the event of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality and creating a sense of astonishment and curiosity about them" (qtd. in Brooker 191). In order to arouse astonishment rather than empathy and to remind the audiences

that they are in a theatre watching an episodic narration of past events, the A-effect is achieved through some anti-illusory techniques such as the use of minimal props and unrealistic scenery, the frequent asides to the audience, and the interruption of the action by didactic songs, dances, dumbshows and the chorus (Brooker 191). Therefore, as Benjamin states, “[t]he alienating of conditions is brought about by processes being interrupted”(18).

As for Stoppardian drama, the A-effect is discernible in the use of the play-within-the-play technique, as seen in *The Real Inspector Hound*, the interruption of the action by dumbshows and the frequent asides to the audience as in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and most significantly of all, in the use of allusions to other works of literature as in *Travesties*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and *The Real Inspector Hound*. By the help of the A-effect, Stoppard constantly reminds the audience of the unreality or the artificial nature of what has been happening onstage. For Boireau, his plays “never fail to advertise that whatever is represented on stage looks like theatre and is first and foremost theatre” (136). They are enriched by literary allusions and distorted quotations taken from other writers’ plays and by the plays-within-plays raising the issue of the discrepancy between art and reality. The allusions constantly force the audience to keep in mind that what they have been watching is merely a theatrical performance which lightens the effect of seriousness. To illustrate, in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard includes obvious references to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* as well as minor references in distorted quotations from Edward Albee’s *The Zoo Story* – ‘Good old east’ in the play, as a case in point, derives from ‘Good old north’ in *The Zoo Story* (Bigsby 13). Likewise, in the same play, the Player’s comment on what tragedy is as follows:

GUIL: Who decides?

PLAYER (*Switching off his smile*): *Decides?* It is written [. . .] We’re tragedians, you see. We follow directions - there is no *choice* involved. The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means. (2.58)

This definition of tragedy is evocative of Miss Prism’s comment on fiction in Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*: “The good end happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.” (Dean 43). Therefore, through the above given lines, Stoppard

multiplies the opportunities to remind the audience of the fact that it is nothing but a fictional representation on the stage.

As regards the characterisation in his plays, Stoppard generally creates bewildered characters who lack power against the forces beyond their control. With this feature of theirs, they resemble J.Alfred Prufrock portrayed by Eliot in “The Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock.” The depiction of the interior monologue of an hopeless ordinary man who realises that he is never going to be an important person in Eliot’s poem becomes an inspiration for Stoppard in portraying his characters.

Indeed, Stoppard’s allusiveness may have come from Eliot. The modernist poetry of Eliot alludes so much to the world of literature and mythology that it brings out a complexity and uncertainty in the meaning. The purpose here is to make poetry allusive as much as possible, and this is achieved through intertextuality and irony. Eliot himself remarks in his essay *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921):

Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning. (65)

Therefore, it can be inferred that the witty dialogues, allusiveness and irony in Stoppard’s works echo Eliot’s understanding of literature or poetry. Furthermore, as a twentieth century writer, Tom Stoppard tries to become even more comprehensive and more allusive, by creating irony and humour, in order to convey the complexity of our age.

Another significant dramatist having given direction to Stoppard’s writings is the Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello (1867-19) who uses the play-within-the-play technique in some of his works. His well-known play, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, for instance, concerns six people, a family from another play who suddenly invade the stage during a rehearsal looking for an author to persuade to dramatise their story (Paulucci 39). The *avant-garde* plays of Pirandello break down the conventions of realistic theatre that the audience have been mostly accustomed to, undermining the illusion in theatre

(Bassanese 17). The act of rehearsal on stage creates an irony about the illusiveness in theatre. The playwright explicitly collapses the illusion and directs his audience to realise the essence of the theatre, that is to say, merely a fictional representation. Pirandello also attempts to abolish the fourth wall in order to break down all the divisions between art and life, the characters and the audience (Bassanese 99). These features of the Pirandellian theatre give direction to the discrepancy between reality and role-playing in many of Stoppard's plays, namely *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, *Travesties*, and *The Real Thing*.

In some of Stoppard's plays, the traces of James Joyce's writings, the pastiche and the presentation of the human psyche can be observed. Like Joyce, Stoppard penetrates into the characters' inner minds and reflects their thoughts through monologues and asides (Hayman "Architectonic" 144). His characters' interior monologues are given through a language which may be fragmented or incongruous at times. The language of these monologues improves our understanding of the characters' consciousnesses. Like Joyce, who experiments on the pastiche technique in *Ulysses*, Stoppard uses the technique in most of his plays by borrowing from other sources and coherently uniting the fragmented parts with one another (Whitaker 200; Brassell 139).

Stoppard presents a rebuttal of metaphysical and philosophical statements in his plays. Although he is against intellectuality, his plays are full of intellectual statements. This intellectuality leads to intertextuality as it requires references to many sources. He interweaves the metaphysical and philosophical themes with allusions, farcical scenes, witty repartees, word plays, as well as allusive characters, either literary or historical, and plagiarised plots. In his plays, the debate of ideas is at the center as in Bernard Shaw's plays; however, the debate is conveyed together with Wildean wit and sophisticated puns. Moreover, the great influence of Beckett, Joyce, and Pirandello is observed in many of his plays. Like these revolutionary men of letters, Stoppard is a stylist in drama.

CHAPTER I: *ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD*

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advice the prince; no doubt, an easy tool. . . (Abrams *Norton* 2:2143)

The owner of these words is not Rosencrantz or Guildenstern, as it may seem at first glance, but J. Alfred Prufrock, a dissatisfied character whom T.S. Eliot created in his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Eliot's poem depicts the interior monologue of a hopeless and ordinary man who realises that he will never manage to become an important person. His hope for the future is deflated, and he can do nothing to change his destiny. Similarly, Tom Stoppard's attendant lords, Ros and Guil - who are ordered to accompany Prince Hamlet to England - are located in a confusing world, and they lack the power to control their lives or fates. Like Prufrock's feeling of inferiority in Eliot's poem, Ros and Guil feel that they are unimportant beings in life. The strong resemblance in the portrayals of these fictional characters conclusively evidences that Stoppard's inspiration and imagination necessary for the creation of his characters come from Eliot's work.

In a similar vein, as Kenneth Tynan points out, another inspiration for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* might have come from Oscar Wilde's prose work *De Profundis* (84-85). Wilde's earlier observations about the ridiculous situation of the two baffled Elizabethan courtiers in *Hamlet*'s plot might have had an influence over Stoppard's focus on Shakespeare's two minor characters. Tynan claims that even the genesis of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966) might have derived from Wilde's ideas about Shakespeare's courtiers as given in *De Profundis*:

I know of nothing in all Drama more incomparable from the point of view of Art, or more suggestive in its subtlety of observation, than Shakespeare's drawing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They are Hamlet's college friends. They have been his companions [. . .]. At the moment when they come across him in the play he is staggering under the weight of a burden intolerable to one of his temperament [. . .]. Of all this, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern realise nothing. (176)

Tom Stoppard, one of the most successful playwrights of British drama of the second half of the twentieth century, made his debut with his masterpiece *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* dwelling on the two attendant lords of Shakespeare's worldwide famous tragedy *Hamlet*. Generally speaking, as mentioned previously in the introductory part of this thesis, Stoppard's drama contains a large number of allusive characters, either fictional or historical or real. The writer, in most of his plays, makes use of allusions, and it can be claimed that allusiveness is a distinct characteristic of Stoppard's drama. As for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, it bears traces of writings other than the overwhelming influence of *Hamlet* which Stoppard uses as his primary source. Actually, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* was first labeled by Brustein "a theatrical parasite, feeding of *Hamlet*, *Waiting For Godot* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* – Shakespeare provides the characters, Pirandello the technique, and Beckett the tone" (93). Another critic, Irving Wardle, thinks that the play is "a highly literary play with frank debts to Pirandello and Beckett" (71). With regard to the influence of these writers, Stoppard states: "influences such as appear in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, and any play of anybody else's, are I suppose admirations that have been unsuccessfully repressed or obscured" (qtd. in Gordon 21). In his interview with Gordon, he admits that he has been stimulated by Beckett, Pirandello and Kafka, saying: "it would be very difficult to write a play which was totally unlike Beckett, Pirandello and Kafka, who's your father, you know?" (21). Also, he particularly states: "there are certain things written in English which make me feel as a diabetic must feel when the insulin goes in. Prufrock and Beckett are the twin syringes of my diet, my arterial system" (qtd. in Hayman "Intellectual" 55). However, as Tynan points out, "despite its multiple sources, *Rosencrantz* is a genuine original, one of a kind" (85).

Since its first performance, the play has been attributed to certain movements and philosophies of the post-war period and has also been discussed in relation to the possible influences of certain dramatists due to its allusive structure, characters, technique and tone. Probably, due to the tremendous impact of such movements and philosophies as the existentialist movement, the absurd philosophy, and the Angry Young Man movement in drama, it becomes almost unavoidable for the critics to try to

fit the play into the category of one of these movements. Wardle, for instance, wrote that Stoppard “manages to provide his two heroes with an existential development” (qtd. in Gordon 16) and identified the play as existentialist. Similarly, Weightman defines Ros and Guil as “existentialist anti-heroes” (72), and Bryden defines the play with the following words: “Mr. Stoppard has taken up the vestigial lives of Hamlet’s two Wittenberg cronies, and made out of them *an existentialist fable*, unabashedly indebted to *Waiting for Godot*, but as witty and vaulting as Beckett’s original is despairing” (69; italics mine). Yet Stoppard later on said that he did not know what the word “existential” meant until it was applied to *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, adding that, to him, existentialism, as a philosophy, was neither attractive nor plausible (Dean 3).

Still, other critics often discuss that *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is also indebted to Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting For Godot* on account of the resemblance between the couple protagonists in both plays. From this point of view, like Beckett’s Vladimir and Estragon whose names are abbreviated as Gogo and Didi, and who have a penchant for playing games, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, or simply Ros and Guil, are minor characters who, in order to pass the time, constantly toss coins as a game in addition to playing a question-game in search of a reasonable meaning for their lives. Because of this, C.W. Bigsby sees the play as “a kind of *Waiting For Godot*, in which Vladimir and Estragon become university wits” (16), considering the intellectual probings of Ros and Guil, Hamlet’s college friends from Wittenberg in Shakespeare’s play. Furthermore, in his *Anger and After* (1977), John Russell Taylor comments on the early scene of Ros and Guil’s constant coin-tossing game in which it comes up heads for 94 consecutive times: “we know immediately that we are in that pale region of Theatre of the Absurd where knockabout and arid philosophical speculation mix or alternate while the awaited never comes [. . .]” (319).

In addition to the passing of time by playing games, the couple protagonists of both plays persist in their slapstick actions as can be understood from the stage directions. The slapstick elements in Stoppard’s play are: Ros and Guil’s failure in bowing Claudius or Hamlet at the same time (1.25), the young player’s, namely Alfred’s

performing the female roles of Elizabethan plays, struggling with a skirt (1.19-20), Ros's falling trousers (2.65), and his mistakenly pinching Guil's leg as his own leg (3.70). Above all, the most obvious example to the slapstick elements in the play occurs in the coin-tossing scene where Ros and Guil exchange coins (1.10). Likewise, in Beckett's play, Didi and Gogo's collapsing in a heap, Gogo's losing of his trousers, their ridiculous exchanging of hats and shoes in a pantomime style can be counted slapstick elements. Finally, all these similarities in stagecraft underline Stoppard's indebtedness to Beckett (Brassell 64).

Stoppard's play, at first sight, seems to have some affinities with absurd drama; however, it is, in fact, far from reflecting the features of absurd drama and its philosophy. It would be ridiculous to define Stoppard's play as a work "out of harmony" or "devoid of purpose" as Martin Esslin, the critic who first coined the term "The Theatre of Absurd" in his book with the same title, and Eugene Ionesco, the father of absurd drama in France, have respectively defined the meaning of "absurd." About the critics' over-emphasis on Beckett's influence over Stoppard, Stoppard states:

[It] is the easiest to make, yet the most deceptive. Most people who say Beckett mean *Waiting For Godot*. They haven't read his novels, for example. I can see a lot of Beckettian things in all my work, but they're not actually to do with the image of two lost souls waiting for something to happen, which is why most people connect *Rosencrantz* with *Waiting For Godot*, because they had this scene in common... I wasn't thinking so much of what they are about so much as the way in which Beckett expresses himself, and the bent of his humour. I find Beckett deliciously funny in the way that he qualifies everything as he goes along, reduces, refines and dismantles. (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 20)

Even though many similarities exist between *Waiting For Godot* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, such as the passing of time with games and the slapstick elements in stage directions, these plays are in reality totally different from each other in terms of the playwrights' intentions, the nature of the characters, and the thematic issues. Duncan precisely summarises the mentioned dissimilarities as follows:

Beckett's play, in short, is about the uncertainty and frustration felt by Didi and Gogo in their interminable waiting in limitless time. Stoppard's is about the uncertainty felt by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in trying to understand the origin and meaning of events which come to realise are carrying them to their deaths. (77)

As a case in point, it can be claimed that Ros and Guil are akin to Didi and Gogo with their frustration and inability to comprehend or control the course of events shaping their lives. However, while Didi and Gogo are trapped in the circular plot of *Waiting for Godot*, a masterpiece of the absurd drama, Ros and Guil are trapped in the linear sequence of events pre-written in *Hamlet*, which amounts to saying that they are confined in a metadrama (Duncan 84; Jenkins *Theatre* 40). In a similar vein, Gruber also supports the idea that Stoppard's play rejects much of the characteristics of absurd drama by comparing them according to Esslin's citations:

[the play] is not 'anti-literary'; it does not 'abandon rational devices and discursive thought', but instead depends upon them; and finally, it does not lament the loss of opportunities for meaning, even for heroism, because Ros and Guil enjoy, albeit briefly, such potential. (92)

More significantly, Tom Stoppard's chief intention in writing the play, that is "to *entertain* a roomful of people with the situation of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at Elsinore" (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 57; italics mine) is not in line with the philosophy behind absurd drama, the aim of which is not to entertain or to provoke laughter, but to reflect the meaninglessness of man's actions in an absurd world, by alienating the audience with the use of grotesque.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead is Stoppard's most discussed play as it embodies multi-layered meanings ranging from existentialism to the disparities between reality and illusion, and life and death. The writer focuses on some philosophical and metaphysical issues by presenting several dualisms like life and death, illusion and reality together with the dualism between free choice and determinism. Ruby Cohn, a critic, accentuates "the depth of the play by referring to the great variety of issues it debates: the relativity of truth, the inscrutability of fate, the problematic nature of identity, the fluidity of art-life boundaries" (110). In addition to these, Stoppard makes clear that his main intention is to entertain:

The play had no substance beyond its own terms, beyond its apparent situation. It was about two courtiers in a Danish castle. Two nonentities surrounded by intrigue, given very little information and much of that false. It had nothing to do with the condition of modern man or the decline of metaphysics. One wasn't thinking, "Life is an anteroom in which one has to kill time". Or I wasn't at any rate. (qtd. in Bradshaw 95)

Despite the existence of profound metaphysical and psychological questions, frivolity of seriousness rises out of Stoppard's ingenious treatment of his material. In one of his interviews, he states that his "objective has always been to perform a marriage between a play of ideas and a farce [. . .]" since this combination "represents two sides of [his] own personality, which can be described as seriousness compromised by [his] frivolity, or [. . .] frivolity redeemed by [his] seriousness" (qtd. in Gussow "*Jumpers*" 73). Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to analyse how Tom Stoppard achieves to trivialise serious issues related with intellectuality, philosophy, and art in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*.

The play opens with "two Elizabethans passing time in a place without any visible character" (1.7). Ros and Guil are alone on stage, betting on the toss of a coin while travelling toward Elsinore, the castle of the Danish King, Cladius and Queen Gertrude who have called them early in the morning to glean what afflicts Prince Hamlet, their close friend. They are not aware of how long they have been spinning coins on the road of Elsinore, the way they are "entitled to" (1.14). Then, they encounter with a group of tragedians with whom they experiment tossing coins as well as playing word games. With the appearance of the tragedians and with their swift performances as inner plays, the disparity between reality and illusion in theatre is emphasised as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Thus, technique and theme collaborate to raise the Shakespearean metaphor of "All the world is a stage" in the play. The scene in which they bet on the toss of a coin with the tragedians ends when it comes surprisingly "tails" after consecutive "heads," and with a sudden shift in setting, Ros and Guil find themselves in Elsinore watching the dumbshow of Hamlet and Ophelia. Later, Cladius and Gertrude appear on stage and instruct Ros and Guil to inspect Hamlet so as to find out the reason of his bizarre attitude. However, the more they detect him, the more they get confused.

In the second act, their confusion continues, and to solve the problem of Hamlet's bizarreness, they start to play a question-game in which statements, repetitions, and non-sequiturs are forbidden. During this time, the tragedians perform *The Murder of Gonzago*, an inner play parallel to *Hamlet*, which provides some clues about what has happened before the beginning of the framing play and what may happen later in the process of action. Witnessing the execution of "two smiling accomplices—friends—courtiers—two spies" (2.59) who accompany a prince to England and are betrayed by a letter in the inner play, Ros and Guil merely get more depressed, but they still continue to the direction they are entitled to.

Act III opens in "pitch darkness with soft sea sounds" (3.70) and sailor voices indicating that Ros and Guil are on board the ship taking Hamlet to England and carrying a letter from the Danish King to the English King. However, when they realise that they are carrying the death warrant for Hamlet, their dilemma between being loyal to the court and being loyal to a friend begins. While Guil is perplexed in his attempt to find a reasonable explanation of killing Hamlet, Ros does not sympathise with the idea of carrying the death warrant. Nonetheless, they do nothing. At night, while they are sleeping, Hamlet exchanges the letter for another, which is known from *Hamlet*, in which it is stated that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are to be killed, not Hamlet. Then from the music they hear, it becomes obvious that the tragedians are also on board, hidden in barrels. Once again the Player appears on stage and participates in Ros and Guil's conversation about the incidents defined by the *Hamlet* script. However, all of a sudden, pirates attack the ship and the Player, Hamlet, Ros and Guil hide in barrels. When confusion is over, they realise that Hamlet has gone, leaving the two bewildered characters depressed since without him they have no function in life. Ros and Guil look at the letter again and discover that the letter is now their own death warrant instructing the King of England to put them to "sudden death" (3.88). Engaged in a constant discussion with the tragedians on the dramatic acting of death on stage, they one by one vanish from the stage, and the play ends with the last scene of *Hamlet* in which while all the characters lie dead on stage, an ambassador from England announces that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.

Tom Stoppard puts forward the bafflement of two minor figures of *Hamlet* who find themselves obviously suspended in a place, without the slightest idea of what is their reason of being there. As Bryden suggests, “[t]hey are frightened strangers in a world somebody else seems to have made” (43). From the beginning, they have to take part in a series of events that they cannot comprehend or control. The incomprehensible events entrapping them are, of course, well-known by the audience since these are parts of *Hamlet*’s plot. Stoppard’s play may well be defined as an example of metadrama with its use of the play-within-the-play device. Stoppard borrows from *Hamlet* not only the *dramatis personae* but also quite a few scenes. He at times handles his material with loyalty to the original parts in *Hamlet*, and at times introduces slight technical changes. Besides, he treats his characters in a more sympathetic manner than Shakespeare does. While Shakespeare portrays them as minor sycophantic courtiers betraying their close friends, Stoppard portrays them as bewildered innocents lacking control in an incomprehensible world.

At the outset, Ros and Guil who are awakened by the king’s messenger at dawn are called to Elsinore, the Danish court. Travelling to Elsinore they bump into a group of tragedians, and while they engage in the tragedians’ performances, they find themselves suddenly transported to the court. At the court, they are summoned to inspect Hamlet, they witness Polonius’s murder, Hamlet and Ophelia’s love affair, the dumbshow of the tragedians, and later on, they are sent to England with Hamlet. As the play progresses, their inability to control their lives and their passivity become more and more obvious. That is, they are first directed to the court, then to England, and finally to their deaths. Similarly, the more they lose control of their lives, the more frustrated and confused they get. The only thing they can realise is that they are “entitled to some direction” (1.14); yet they are still devoid of the power and knowledge to decide their own direction.

Moreover, they are not given any chance. In the coin-tossing game, the coin’s coming up heads consecutively for 94 times can be interpreted as an implication of their unchanging “chance.” This impossible situation illustrates that the laws of probability are not valid in the play. In the coin-tossing scene, Ros and Guil are betting on the toss

of a coin, and Ros always bets on “heads” and always wins. Guil is worried about the implications of this kind of an impossible situation rather than his losing. On the other hand, Ros “betrays no surprise” (1.7) though he is embarrassed to be constantly surpassing his friend, Guil. Guil lists the “the possible explanations” which, according to him, “must be indicative of something” (1.10):

GUIL: [. . .] One: I’m willing it. Inside where nothing shows, I am the essence of a man spinning double-headed coins, and betting against himself in private atonement for an unremembered past. (*He spins a coin at ROS.*)

ROS: Heads.

GUIL: Two: time has stopped dead, and the single experience of one coin being spun once has been repeated ninety times. . . . (*He flips a coin, looks at it, tosses it to ROS.*) On the whole, doubtful. Three: divine intervention, that is to say, a good turn from above concerning him, cf. children of Israel, or retribution from above concerning me, cf. Lot’s wife. Four: a spectacular vindication of the principle that each individual coin spun individually (*he spins one*) is as likely to come down heads as tails and therefore should cause no surprise each individual time it does. (*It does. He tosses it to ROS.*)

ROS: I’ve never known anything like it!

GUIL: And a syllogism: One, he has never known anything like it. Two, he has never known anything to write about. Three, it is nothing to write about . . . Home . . . What’s the first thing you remember? (1.10-11)

The coin-tossing game scene is crucial to get information about Stoppard’s characters. For instance, following his account of the possible explanations, Guil starts to count syllogisms in response to Ros’ naivety. He constantly tries to draw Ros into a more sophisticated conversation in order to discuss all these indications, yet Ros remains indifferent. Obviously, albeit together, Ros and Guil are the two opposing sides of an eternal confrontation: Guil is dominant whereas Ros is submissive. Guil is contemplative and inquisitive, in other words, intellectual, whereas Ros is unsophisticated and indifferent or unintelligent. In relation to this, while Guil is ardently attempting to discover a possible explanation – or, as he calls it in his long monologue, a “scientific approach to the examination of the phenomena” (1.12) – Ros, without being distracted, is cutting his fingernails, and his mind is focused on another curious scientific phenomenon: the growing fingernails and beard after death.

In addition to their unreasonable and different approaches to the phenomena, there seems to exist another ridiculous situation, that is, the characters cannot remember their

past. Guil's first possible explanation touches diligently upon his own ridiculous situation. He is a man whose mind is without recollections. As a matter of fact, in the play, Stoppard repetitively presents situations which exemplify the fact that the characters cannot remember the past. For instance, they do not even remember how long they have been spinning coins (1.9), and Ros naively says, "we've been spinning coins for as long as I remember" (1.10). Thus, it can be asserted that as soon as the play begins, the writer overthrows the rules of probability, the importance of memory, and identity.

Tom Stoppard brings forward the desperate situation of Ros and Guil who are abandoned in a place, and who are subjected to a series of events which they cannot contemplate. They simply pass the time by flipping coins, playing language games, and vainly attempting to question the meaning of their lives. However, their attempt to discover the purpose of their existence fails each time when the language games lead them into more confusing questions about their identity and their past, and when the coin-tossing game continues with consecutive heads demolishing all the rules of probability beyond human understanding (Biggsby 11). Their despair grows deeper, and life, from their point of view, becomes unbearably enigmatic with the consequence that they begin to play games with greater pleasure. Most of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* consists of Ros and Guil's private off-stage moments when they choose to relish their plight by resorting to games. As mentioned before in the introduction, Tim Brassell separates the "on-stage" and "off-stage" selves of the characters and states that their game scenes take place when they are off-stage, left alone trying to comprehend the "on-stage" episodes and their relationship to the episodes (39).

During the sequence of events in the first and second acts of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Ros and Guil are sometimes seen as on-stage characters of *Hamlet* and sometimes as off-stage characters of *Hamlet*. It appears that they either participate in some scenes of *Hamlet* in which they have a role, or watch the play from backstage. As backstage actors, while waiting for their scenes, or as put by Brustein, while "waiting for *Hamlet*," they spend time whereby games. Accordingly, Keyssar-Franke claims that Stoppard's invented scenes create "a sense of the possibility of

freedom and the tension of the improbability of escape” (qtd. in Gruber 86). On the same issue, Gruber contends that the play’s opening with a coin-tossing scene, destroying the rules of probability and carrying mysterious implications, increases tension as “one senses [. . .] the chilling presence of *Hamlet*, waiting menacingly in the wings” (87). Expectedly, as the stage directions indicate, the coin tossing game is followed by an abrupt change in lighting, which is actually the first intersection with *Hamlet* (2.3): It is at this point that Claudius and Gertrude encounter Ros and Guil.

In the first act, when both of the characters are left outside *Hamlet*’s plot, with their secret mission to watch out the Prince by the King’s order, they again resort to question games and role-playing. In order to discover the reason behind Hamlet’s strange behaviour, they ask questions to one another as if they were in a detective-story, and subsequently inspect one another through role-playing, assuming they are Hamlet. However, they cannot reach any absolute solution. Their efforts of understanding the *Hamlet* sequence continue in the second act where they philosophise both Shakespeare’s play and Hamlet’s actions. In this act, nevertheless, they are participants of neither game playing nor role playing; they are rather an audience who witness the players’ rehearsal which serves to enlighten *Hamlet*’s story as a mirroring inner play. Here, as Delaney claims, the players become “the mediators between the two courtiers and the world of *Hamlet*” (Tom 27). Therefore, the role-playing is carried out by the troupe of players in the second act, which comprises the major metadramatic element in the play.

In the final act, in order to cope with their frustration stemming from their abruptly finding themselves on a boat sailing to England, and to sort out why they are escorting Hamlet to the King of England with a letter given by Claudius, they once again return to role-playing and, by turn, assume the role of the King of England. Nonetheless, the role-playing ends when Ros opens the letter of Hamlet’s death command. Yet after the pirates attack their ship and Hamlet gets lost, their belief in role-playing once again persists, and they continue to try to sort out what they are going to say to the King of England. The second phase of role-playing on the boat ends with Guil’s opening the letter again and seeing their own death warrant. The two scenes of role-playing, ending

with the opening of two different letters, are crucial in the play as they serve to link the characters' bafflement to the course of events. These scenes illustrate their method of solving the problems although in none of these scenes they can find a satisfiable solution to the death warrants. Their inability of finding an answer to their predicament becomes a vicious circle; that is to say, they ironically persevere in playing the coin-tossing game, the question games, and the role-playings.

Significantly, their infinite game playing is persistently interrupted by some other characters appearing on stage. First, their coin-tossing game is interrupted by the troupe of players also seen in *Hamlet* where they are called to perform the dumbshow, "The Murder of Gonzago"; second, their language game is interrupted by the appearance of Hamlet. From the beginning to the end, the other characters' intrusion on Ros and Guil's off-stage moments seems rather disturbing; however, it can also be inferred that even if there were no such intrusion, Ros and Guil would probably continue their infinite games without any tangible result, and possibly in a more confused state. As for the disturbance, especially Ros is irritated by these interruptions as witnessed when he shouts into the wings of the stage: "All right, we know you're in there! Come out talking! (*Pause.*) We have no control. None at all. . . ." (2.51). The realisation of their incapability intensifies Ros's growing frustration which makes him shout into the wings for a second time:

ROS: "They're taking us for granted! Well, I won't stand for it! In future, notice will be taken . . . Keep out, then! I forbid anyone to enter! (*No one comes-Breathing heavily.*) That's better. . . .
(*Immediately, behind him a grand procession enters, principally CLAUDIUS, GERTRUDE, POLONIUS and OPHELIA. CLAUDIUS takes ROS's elbow as he passes and is immediately deep in conversation: the context is Shakespeare Act III, Scene i [...]*) (2.52)

Paradoxically, all of a sudden, these characters enter the stage talking within the context of *Hamlet*. Stoppard, as the authorial power, deliberately cuts the game scenes of Ros and Guil with intertextual references, presumably assuming that the audience is knowledgeable about these references, and by so doing, he illustrates the weakness of the two bewildered innocents. The intertextual interruptions bring the characters' ridiculous situation to the surface. As the play progresses, these intertextual

interruptions appear more frequently, adding to the growing sense of humour, despite leading the characters to their final destination: their death. Later on, Guil, too, complains about this kind of interruptions: “As soon as we make a move they’ll come pouring in from every side, shouting obscure instructions, confusing us with ridiculous remarks, messing us about from here to breakfast and getting our names wrong” (2.62). Since they are unable to comprehend the happenings taking place around them, Ros and Guil are presented as a confused couple, controlled by the others.

Their non-existent memory creates one of the most deeply ironic situations in the play. Basically, all they can remember is a messenger on horseback waking them up at dawn and shouting their names to summon them to the King of Denmark. Therefore, without any memory of the past, they have to rely on what they are told. They are essentially dependent on the other characters’ words in “recollecting” their past memories as unequivocally seen in their conversation:

ROS: . . . We’re his *friends*.
 GUIL: How do you know?
 ROS: From our young days brought up with him.
 GUIL: You’ve only got their word for it.
 ROS: But that’s what we depend on. (3.79)

Besides, they sometimes appear to be uncertain of their identity, and they even have to rely on others’ words about who they are. In their first encounter with the Player, for instance, Ros introduces themselves wrongly, though he swiftly corrects the names without embarrassment:

ROS: My name is Guildenstern, and this is Rosencrantz. . . . I’m sorry – *his* name’s Guildenstern, and *I’m* Rosencrantz.
 PLAYER: A pleasure. We’ve played to bigger, of course, but quality counts for something. I recognized you at once –
 ROS: And who are we?
 PLAYER: - as fellow artists.
 ROS: I thought we were gentlemen. (1.16)

Moreover, as they have unimportant roles in the frame play *Hamlet*, in the later scenes in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, they are also mixed up by the other

characters, especially by the King and Queen of Denmark. Stoppard intentionally creates suspense in Gertrude's first speech addressed to Ros and Guil. She says: "Good (*fractional suspense*) gentlemen . . ." (1.26) which implies both the practical solution the Queen found to end up the confusion in distinguishing which one is Ros and which one is Guil and a nuance whether they are gentlemen or "fellow artists" (1.16), in parallel with the Player's implication of their being artists. Thus, the question of their existence, including the problematic nature of their memory and identity, can be enlightened by understanding the fact that they are merely characters in a play.

With the introduction of the Player, the play gains another noteworthy motif, namely the discrepancy between the real world and the stage world. The troupe of players has an important function in the play as they cause Ros and Guil to change into an "audience" watching their dress rehearsals or little dumbshows, the inner plays of Stoppard's play (Egan 97). However, their playfulness is nothing more than an artificial vitality because of their unreal memory and identity. Moreover, The Player's words, "by this time tomorrow we might have forgotten everything we ever knew" (1.15) as well as "We're actors . . . we pledged our identities" (2.46), parallel with Ros and Guil's situation, emphasising the fact that all players naturally memorise and delete different roles and plays each time they perform. Throughout the play, the Player has a functional role in implying that Ros and Guil are merely minor players in Shakespeare's play. As baffled players, they look as if they were pushed onto the stage without being given any information about their roles and the play. Like clumsy players, they mix up their roles, unsure about who is Ros and who is Guil. For this reason, it becomes justifiable to assert that they have no recollection of the past, and that they are unconscious of time and direction in addition to being uncertain of their identity.

The play dramatises not only Ros and Guil's experience with each other as couple protagonists, but also their interaction with the players, their antagonists with whom they discuss several issues like the major points of acting – particularly acting death on stage – the dualisms between illusion and reality, predestination and free choice, and loss of control. Unlike Ros and Guil, the players are conscious of their identity as actors although their identity or existence is acknowledged only when there is someone

watching them. Although Ros and Guil do not realise the fact that they are also actors, their identity or existence is valid in relation to their parts in *Hamlet*'s plot. That is why, whenever they are left alone, they grow uncertain about their identities and the meaning of their existence. It looks as if they get lost in the midst of the unanswered questions they pose and attempt to answer during the course of their endless conversation. Joseph Duncan's comment on Ros and Guil clearly highlights this point: "they are non-entities who do not recall anything about their previous existence; they gain their only memorable experience and their only identity through their involvement in the events of *Hamlet*" (80).

Tom Stoppard keeps the Shakespearean metaphor "All the world's a stage" at the heart of his play. Through the exploration of the discrepancy between art and reality, he brilliantly tackles with the nature of truth. Despite the whole struggle for finding the meaning of their existence, the truth is obscure for Ros and Guil. They are unaware of the fact that their world is a stage, and that they are merely players. They are confined inside a play which is written some time ago, and are supposed to act roles not knowing about the content of the play.

Unlike Ros and Guil, the Player is conscious of the theatricality of the play. He acknowledges his own reality which is located in a playworld. The reason of his being is to act, and as an actor, his existence is maintained only on stage.

GUIL: Well . . . aren't you going to change into your costume?

PLAYER: I never change out of it, sir.

GUIL: Always in character.

PLAYER: That's it.

(Pause)

GUIL: Aren't you going to – come *on*?

PLAYER: I *am* on. (1.24)

In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard intensely focuses on the artistic reality which incessantly repeats itself. Generally speaking, in drama, in every performance, players perform the written script and play the part of characters, most of the time with no change. The characters are immortal beings fixed in timelessness; they resist the flow of time. Among Stoppard's characters, only the Player is aware of this

artistic reality. He well knows that, as players, in other words, as characters created by the playwright, they are going to exist inside a play, for their account, inside Stoppard's play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, forever and endlessly. Nevertheless, in contrast to the Player's consciousness, Ros and Guil obviously question this timelessness since they cannot adapt to the situation. For instance, to explain the successive "heads" of the coin-tossing game, Guil, without perception of the implication, asserts: "[. . .] time has stopped dead, and the single experience of one coin being spun once has been repeated ninety times [. . .] On the whole, doubtful" (1.10). His explanation for this phenomenal situation implies that the repetitious experience of a coin can be likened to the repetitious performance of a play.

Moreover, the Player persistently lays emphasis on the coin metaphor. He says: "For some of us it is performance, for others patronage. They are two sides of the same coin, or, let us say, being as there are so many of us, the same side of two coins" (1.16). The Player indirectly suggests that as two opposing sides, the artistic world and the real world share the same coin, that is, the same play. Furthermore, he hints at the similarity between Ros and Guil and himself since they all belong to the same playworld as the same side of two coins, that is, the same fictitious characters of two plays: *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*.

During the time he spends with the baffled courtiers, the Player attempts to train them on the rules of acting and thus functions as a tutor who teaches to Ros and Guil, his students, the chief points of acting and the dramatic conventions in theatre.

GUIL: But for God's sake what are we supposed to *do*?!

PLAYER: Relax. Respond. That's what people do. You can't go through life questioning your situation at every turn.

GUIL: But we don't know what's going on, or what to do with ourselves. We don't know how to *act*.

PLAYER: Act natural. You know why you're here at least.

GUIL: We only know what we are told, and that's little enough. And for all we know it isn't even true.

PLAYER: For all anyone knows, nothing is. Everything has to be taken on trust; truth is only that which is taken to be true. It's the currency of living. There may be nothing behind it, but it doesn't make any difference so long as it is honoured. One acts on assumptions [. . .] (2.47-48)

As a counsellor, the Player tries to ease Ros and Guil's desperate situation. He advises them to stop questioning any more and to adjust to their assigned roles.

The difference between the Player's consciousness and Ros and Guil's unconsciousness of the theatrical world is one of the ironic situations in the play. Furthermore, this ironic situation is at the core of the intertextual link between the two playworlds, to be more specific, Stoppard's play and Shakespeare's play. Stoppard constantly enhances the intertextual reality of his play with his persevering stress upon this irony:

GUIL: Where are you going?
 PLAYER: I can come and go as I please.
 GUIL: You're evidently a man who knows his way around.
 PLAYER: I've been here before.
 GUIL: We're still finding our feet.
 PLAYER: I should concentrate on not losing your heads.
 GUIL: Do you speak from knowledge?
 PLAYER: Precedent.
 GUIL: You've been here before. (2.47)

Stoppard keeps on underlining the irony deriving from the Player's knowledge about Ros and Guil's imminent fate as well as the audiences' assumed knowledge about the intertextual reality. As the story is already known, the audience watches the events in a more intellectual or critical state of mind, rather than getting fully and emotionally involved in the sequence of events. The audience is watching the play with a critical detachment through the knowledge of Stoppard's re-creation of two Shakespearean characters, their plight and their fate. About the play metaphor, Berlin argues: "Stoppard forces us to be conscious observers of a play frozen before us in order that it may be examined critically" (47). Later in the play, Stoppard ingeniously exploits the dumbshow technique just like Shakespeare does in *Hamlet* with the dumbshow of "The Murder of Gonzago," and again ingeniously explains why he has made use of dumbshow as a device, through the mouth of the Player: "[. . .] it makes the action that follows more or less comprehensible; [. . .] we are tied down to a language which makes up in obscurity what it lacks in style" (56). So, Stoppard, via the Player, endorses Ros and Guil in contemplating their predicament and altering their imminent fate as the authorial power. Yet Ros and Guil's reaction to all these foreshadowings implied through the dumbshow of the players, is virtually indifferent. For instance, after the

dress rehearsal of “The Murder of Gonzago,” the inner play of *Hamlet* and the inner-inner play of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, with some collaborating scenes from the dumbshow of *Hamlet* also, the players perform a subsequent dumbshow in which two spies wearing coats identical to Ros and Guil’s present a letter to the King of England and are executed suddenly by the King’s command:

(What brings ROS forward is the fact that under their cloaks the two SPIES are wearing coats identical to those worn by ROS and GUIL, whose coats are now covered by their cloaks. ROS approaches “his” SPY doubtfully. He does not quite understand why the coats are familiar. ROS stands close, touches the coat, thoughtfully. . . .)

ROS: Well, if it isn’t---! No, wait a minute, don’t tell me—it’s a long time since—where was it? Ah, this is taking me back to—when was it? I know you, don’t I? I never forget a face—*(he looks into the SPY’s face)* . . . not that I know yours, that is. For a moment I thought—no, I don’t know you, do I? Yes, I’m afraid you’re quite wrong. You must have mistaken me for someone else.

PLAYER *(to GUIL)*: Are you familiar with this play?

GUIL: No.

PLAYER: A slaughterhouse—eight corpses all told. It brings out the best in us. (2.60)

Ros’ suspicious attitude towards “his” SPY” does not result in any conclusive reaction as he cannot contemplate the obvious similarity. Yet his hesitations are quite ironic, particularly from the point of the audiences who are once again made aware of the artificiality of the play by Stoppard. Ros’ incomprehension of the similarity between themselves and the two SPIES, Guil’s unfamiliarity with the dumbshow, in other words, their blindness in recognising their impending death collapses all the efforts of the Player who concentrates on not losing their heads.

Another significant theme Stoppard wants to underline here is their predestination. No matter how such implications enlighten their meaning of existence and inform them about their impending death, they are condemned to their fate, or to the restricting plot of *Hamlet*, determined by Shakespeare. Brassell has made a far-reaching commentary on the theme of determinism in the play as follows:

The ideas of role and fate expressed in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* do not operate merely to further the playfully theatrical comedy inherent in the courtiers’ struggle to understand the meaning of their predicament; they invoke the inability of all mankind to understand those forces ultimately in control of their lives and fates. (53)

Stoppard makes use of some of the most dominant and familiar themes in literature, that is man's realisation of his inferiority and his inability to control his life against external forces. In the play, Ros and Guil's confinement in the predetermined world of *Hamlet* becomes rather irritating at times:

GUIL (*quietly*): Where we went wrong was getting on a boat. We can move, of course, change direction, rattle about, but our movement is contained within a larger one that carries us along as inexorably as the wind and current. . .

ROS: They had it in for us, didn't they? Right from the beginning. Who'd have thought that we were so important?

GUIL: But why? Was it all for this? Who are we that so much should converge on our little deaths? (*In anguish to the PLAYER.*) Who are *we*?

PLAYER: You are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. That's enough. (2.89)

Ros and Guil are still so much engaged in raising questions about their identity (such as "Who are *we*?") and about the unpleasant welcoming to the destiny (such as "Why us?") that they eventually surrender themselves to the course of events and finally to death. Their identification as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in their incomprehensible world, is sufficient, and their obedience to their predetermined roles is their only direction. However, Guil obviously says later: "There must be a moment, at the beginning, where we could have said – no. But somehow we missed it" and subsequently remarks: "Well, we'll know better next time" (3.91). The futility of their attempt to alter their destiny or even the thought of altering it is another ironic situation since arriving at a decision about such a change in their lives is accurately impossible.

Apart from the difference of consciousness, another differentiating feature between the players and the couple is their attitude towards death. The Player's identification of *Hamlet* as "a slaughterhouse" with eight corpses that enables the players to exhibit all their professional skills, subverts the overall influence of the gravity of death by distancing the audience from the divinity of a well-known tragedy. Ironically, from the outset, the players call themselves "tragedians" though they contrast with the concept in each occasion (Egan 98). For the players, death is nothing more than a minor but glamorous section of an acting process. According to the Player, it "brings out the poetry in them," (Egan 100) and "[i]t's what the actors do best. They have to exploit whatever talent is given to them, and their talent is dying. They can die heroically,

comically, ironically, slowly, suddenly, disgustingly, charmingly, or from a great height” (2.60).

The Player who contemplates death within the borders of stage without any real experience represents the players whose greatest talent and pleasure is dying or killing while performing a play. Confronting the Player’s artificial concept of death, Guil calls them “Actors! The mechanics of cheap melodrama!” (61), adding, “That isn’t *death!*” (61). He suggests that death cannot be genuinely acted on stage. With Guil’s suggestion, Stoppard intends to distinguish the borderline between art and reality. Art cannot mirror life itself in terms of death as a “real” experience, as the end of life. As a matter of fact, the end of life, the “real” death for the players is a state of passivity in a forgotten world just as, on their first appearance, the Player says: “we grow rusty and you catch us at the very point of decadence” (1.15).

At the very end of the play, after having learned about their death command, Guil grows so annoyed with the Player’s artificial concept of death that he, in a great anguish, taking the dagger from the Player’s belt, stabs the Player. In a few moments, he feels satisfied as the Player’s death justifies his ideas. Yet as soon as the Player stands with the applauses of the others, Guil gets thoroughly astonished. This scene is an invention of Stoppard himself, and for the first and only time in the play, a climactic performance is experienced, a choice is made, and a genuine performance not dictated by the events of *Hamlet* is witnessed by the audience (Berlin 48). Here, Stoppard ironically plays upon Ros and Guil’s astonished situation, facing with the Player’s “real” death on stage, as they believe, and their foolish situation among the troupe of players, facing with the Player’s “pseudo-death.” This kind of a crafty demonstration tricks not only the two courtiers but also the audience watching the play, confirming the Player’s earlier statements that the audiences are prepared to, or “conditioned to” (2.61) believe in death onstage. In this aspect, Stoppard relates Ros and Guil’s situation to that of the audience, implying again the metaphor of the world as a stage and suggesting that they are players as well as spectators who are watching the course of events dictated by *Hamlet* as manifested in Ros’ remark “I feel like a spectator” about the uncontrolled events surrounding him.

As a matter of fact, the death motif conspicuously twinkles within the title of the play. First of all, as the title indicates, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead from the beginning. Even though they cannot comprehend anything in their lives, their destiny is written (Jenkins *Theatre* 39). As they are men, they must die naturally; as they are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of *Hamlet*, they must die theatrically. Berlin suggests that the title of the play is the key word: “Not only are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern going to their deaths, but for Stoppard the two characters, representing modern man, *are* dead, although seemingly alive” (44). Therefore, as unresisting and inactive characters, they are clearly apt to decay in their predicament, which is another presentation of the death motif.

From the beginning to the end of the play, the motif of death is frequently emphasised in many places. At the outset, as a probable explanation to the phenomenal situation, Guil says: “Time has stopped dead” (1.10); then Ros talks about another phenomenal situation, in other words, the growing fingernails and beards after death (1.13); and subsequently on their first encounter, the Player coincidentally talks about their growing rusty at the very point of decadence (1.15). At many times throughout the play, the Player not only persists in showing a penchant for death and tragedy, but he also tries to make Ros and Guil realise the impending death by means of such implications saying, “I should concentrate on not losing your heads” (2.47), and “[i]n our experience most things end in death” (3.89). Towards the end, Ros and Guil are unawaringly approaching their final with some intuitive feelings of their impending death. For instance, the atmosphere grows “autumnal” (2.68) for Guil at the end of Act Two, and similarly, “the sun’s going down” (3.87) for Ros in Act Three. Moreover, Stoppard’s deliberate opening of Act Three “in pitch darkness” reinforces Ros and Guil’s fear of death as well as the audience’s knowledge of their impending death. Besides, in the final act, they are on a boat which conveys another death image, referring to the boat that crosses the sea of death, carrying the souls of the deceased to the other side.

Throughout the play, Ros and Guil are preoccupied with the concept of death, and as the play progresses their preoccupation turns out to be an obsession. Stoppard intentionally presents their obsessive probings on death with an implication of their being dead from

the outset, since they are confined in a play directing them to death, or stuffed in a box with a lid on it. This idea can be illustrated by Ros' thoughts about one's being dead:

Do you think of yourself as actually *dead*, lying in a box with a lid on it? [. . .] It's silly to be depressed by it. I mean one thinks of it like being *alive* in a box, one keeps forgetting to take an account the fact that one is *dead* . . . which should make all the difference . . . shouldn't it? I mean, you'd never *know* you were in a box, would you? It would be just like being *asleep* in a box [. . .] you'd wake up dead, for a start, and then where would you be? [. . .] Stuffed in a box like that, I mean you'd be in there for ever. Even taking into account the fact that you're dead, it isn't a pleasant thought. *Especially* if you're dead, really . . . *ask* yourself, if I asked you straight off—I'm going to stuff you in this box now, would you rather be alive or dead? Naturally, you'd prefer to be alive. Life in a box is better than no life at all. (2.50-51)

The persistent engagement with death is simply mental, not emotional. As Berlin remarks, "Stoppard does not root the intellectual in felt experience, does not fuse the thinking with feeling" (45), and according to him, death is "the object of cool speculation" (47). For instance, when Shakespeare's and Stoppard's plays are compared, it can be obviously seen that the characters' approach to the subject of death is totally different. On the one hand, Hamlet's thinking he is dead exhaustively reaches the state of insanity; on the other, Ros and Guil's constant probing on death, which has lost its solemnity, remains precisely as a far-detached concept (48). Berlin also regards this as a shortcoming in Stoppard's dramatic art, notably in terms of Stoppard's problematic idiom which "is not rich enough to sustain a direct confrontation with the large issues of life and death" (45) and puts forward two examples from Guil's speech. One of these is Guil's question "The only beginning is birth and the only end is death – if you can't count on that, what can you count on?" which is not a direct confrontation about the metaphysical dichotomy between the beginning and the end of life, but a superficial statement about a natural fact. The other example comes from Guil's remarks on death in the last act which exclusively evidences "a direct philosophical probing" (Berlin 45) deprived of any profound sense of death: "Death is . . . not. Death isn't. You take my meaning. Death is the ultimate negative. Not being" (3.78).

It would be incomplete if the death motif in the play is taken into account without the intertextual links to *Hamlet* and *Waiting for Godot*, both of which stand as masterpieces of English literature and are distinguished works of art, dealing with many significant

themes, particularly, with death and the meaning of life. Berlin regards Stoppard's play as "conspicuously intellectual" for the ground that "it 'thinks' a great deal about the issues dramatised in both *Hamlet* and *Waiting for Godot* – appearance vs. reality, identity, life as play and men as players, is someone watching? – and these issues are pondered against the backdrop of determinism and death" (44).

First of all, it would be better to examine the direct intertextual quality of *Hamlet* in respect to the death motif. The reality of death and the meaning of life dominate the core of Shakespeare's tragedy. It begins with a dead king, continues with Hamlet's experience with his father's ghost, Hamlet's holding Yorick's skull in the graveyard and his state of thinking about being dead and ends with the deaths of almost all the characters. In his first soliloquy, "O that this too too solid flesh would melt" (1.2.129), and later, in his famous soliloquy, "To be or not to be. . ." (3.1.156), Hamlet recurrently questions how dignified the reality of death is; if it is a sheer quintessence of dust and if death is a sheer quintessence of dust, what is the importance of life? Hamlet questions the paradox in the dualism between life and death: why human values life so greatly, if at the same time he knows that one day he will die? The fundamental metaphysical and philosophical probings of the sense of life and death are evocative of both the existentialist thought and the absurdity of human condition.

The problem leads to the absurdity of life and man's futile search for a worthwhile meaning as confirmed in "The Myth of Sisyphus." The twentieth century philosopher and writer Albert Camus (1913-1960), in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1942), concludes that man is born into an irrational world in which he eventually feels absurd. In this philosophical essay, Camus establishes his own philosophy of the absurd by referring to a character in Greek mythology, Sisyphus, who is condemned to roll a heavy rock up to the top of a hill in the Underworld. The rock rolls back over him the moment he reaches the top, but he has to start again and continue this meaningless task forever. For Camus, Sisyphus is the absurd hero who can accomplish nothing and who is conscious of his plight. The paradoxical situation of Sisyphus is comparable to the absurd situation of mankind in terms of the similar persistence in making an effort to accomplish a task or a job no matter how unsuccessfully it all ends. Man has to further

this task in spite of his knowledge that he will eventually die. The metaphysical questioning of the absurdity of life in the face of death in *Hamlet* is a thematic link to *Waiting for Godot*, Stoppard's second major source of intertextual borrowing. In Beckett's play, too, death is a dominant theme in the sense that the main concern in the play is the futility of life which certainly ends in death. The two tramps' questioning of their lives and their waiting for Godot who never comes increases the terror of death during the play.

In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Ros and Guil may seem to be responsible for their lives or for their actions; however, actually they are not. This would be impossible for them, for, as fictitious characters, they are created by an author in a playworld. They have no free will and no responsibility for their actions which conclusively limits their capability of controlling events. This leads to several interlinking questions: "If man is not free in making choices during his life, then what is the importance of life?" and if so, "Isn't life absurd, then?" Like Sisyphus, the mythological figure who is not allowed to stop pushing the rock up the hill, mankind is powerless or insignificant in this whole universe and left to the mercy of the uncontrolled forces of fate. Likewise, Guil confesses that "we are little men, we don't know the ins and outs of the matter, there are wheels within wheels, etcetera—it would be presumptuous of us to interfere with the designs of fate or even of kings" (3.80). However, his confession includes passivity since they do nothing for Hamlet after learning about his death sentence. Ros and Guil's passivity in the play, which goes in parallel with Hamlet's passivity in Shakespeare's play, is a consequence of their lack of responsibility for and free choice against the happenings. As Bennett claims, "[t]heir actual role in the play is purely passive" (78), though they are the protagonists of the play. They do not *choose* to get on the boat to England, but they *find* themselves there on the boat at the beginning of the third act. This state of passivity also evidence that they are non-beings in a real world, or that they are fictitious beings in a playworld.

The final act of the play is the most independent act from *Hamlet*'s plot. It shows the probable course of events on aboard towards England, which is, in Shakespeare's play, not seen onstage but only narrated by Hamlet to his friend Horatio when he comes back

to his homeland, Denmark (5.2). Using Hamlet's narration of the sea voyage, Stoppard composes the final act and focuses on his aim in writing the play, namely the presentation of Ros and Guil's bafflement on the route to death. While doing so, he inevitably expands on the themes of death and determinism.

The sea and being aboard on a ship in the final act metaphorically refer to external fate and death, respectively. The sea image in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* stems from Shakespeare's plays, in most of which the sea and the terror related with it play a significant role. In *Comedy of Errors*, as well as in *Twelfth Night*, twins are separated by a sea accident; in *The Merchant of Venice*, the sank ships of misfortunate Antonio leads him to misery; in *The Tempest*, the devastating sea storm shipwrecks and brings the travelling noblemen onto an island; and eventually Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in *Hamlet* are sent to the King of England via sea with a letter of their death command. All these illustrate the use of the sea image as external fate.

There is also the boat image to which two meanings can be attributed: predestination and death. The boat image refers to predestination as seen in Guil's words: "Yes, I'm very fond of boats myself. I like the way they're – contained. You don't have to worry about which way to go, or whether to go at all – the question doesn't arise, because you're on a *boat*, aren't you?" (3.72). For Guil, being on a boat is quite safe and free, which bears the implication that surrendering to fate alleviates one's pain. However, later on Guil suffers from the painful restriction brought about by their fate: "Where we went wrong was getting on a boat. We can move, of course, change direction, rattle about, but our movement is contained within a larger one that carries us along as inexorably as the wind and current . . ." (3.89), symbolising an external force that commands the characters to obey its rules. Additionally, the boat image also refers to death as Guil puts it: "you can't not-be on a boat" which is highly reminiscent of Guil's definition of death as "not-being" (3.78). The intellectual quality of this kind of probing on serious subjects like determinism and death is what differentiates Stoppard's play from *Hamlet*.

In *Hamlet*, fate is introduced as a mysterious and inscrutable force that is harshly experienced by the characters in terms of divine intervention, and for this reason, it

creates the effect of catharsis on the audience. In Stoppard's play, although fate is also presented as a mysterious and inscrutable force, the characters' experience is more superficial as the tone of the play is ridiculous. There are two reasons for the superficiality of fate: the first one is Stoppard's intention to reflect the two courtiers' bafflement in their predicament, and the second one is the plot which is already known by the audience.

It has already been stated that Tom Stoppard often makes use of allusions taken from some vital parts of *Hamlet*, either abridging the long parts or employing them as they are. Besides, it can be observed that while abridging the long parts of *Hamlet*, Stoppard usually omits some words and shortly presents the situation through body language, gestures and mimes. For instance, he deliberately metamorphoses Hamlet's famous soliloquy "To be or not to be" into a simple but comprehensive mime as seen in the following stage direction:

*(HAMLET enters upstage, and pauses, weighing up the pros and cons of making his quietus.)
(ROS and GUIL watch him.). (2.53)*

By doing so, Stoppard destroys the sense of solemnity within the soliloquy. This kind of humorous treatment is common in the whole play as exemplified by another mime in which Ophelia and Hamlet appear:

(OPHELIA has been sewing and she holds the garment. They are both mute. HAMLET, with his doublet all unbraced, no hat upon his head, his stockings fouled, ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle, pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other. . .). (1.25)

Here, there is a direct reference to the scene in *Hamlet* in which Ophelia describes Hamlet's strange behaviour while sewing in her room in Act 2, Scene 1.

My lord, as I was sewing in my chamber,
Lord Hamlet, -with his doublet all unbraced;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport

As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors,-he comes before me. (2.1.680)

From such examples, one may conclude that there is a noteworthy difference between the presentations of the common scenes in Shakespeare's play and Stoppard's play. It may be claimed that laying the central focus on Ros and Guil, Stoppard rewrites certain parts of *Hamlet* by either abridging them into the stage directions or presenting them as mimes and dumbshows or briefly narrating these situations. While using the vital fragments borrowed from *Hamlet* in his allusive play, Stoppard destroys the sense of tragedy by accounting the events from Ros and Guil's point of view, that is to say, by projecting the spotlights on the two courtiers' bafflement.

Tom Stoppard's presentation of Ros and Guil as sympathetic characters has often been criticised by the critics as their characterisation is not loyal to their originals. Brustein considers their role in Shakespeare's play as "time-servers-cold, calculating opportunists" (95), while in Stoppard's play, they are "garulous, child-like, ingratiating simpletons bewildered by the parts they must play" (95). In Stoppard's own description, they are "a couple of bewildered innocents" (qtd. in Gordon 18) whose innocence, for Delaney, "is not primarily a lack of evil but a lack of knowledge" since "they are *naifs*," and their bewilderment is the main concern of the play because of their failure in grasping the incidents (*Tom* 21). For Jenkins, however, in *Hamlet*, "they are mere henchmen who betray their past friendship with the Prince, though they are too transparent ever to pose a threat to him" (*Theatre* 41). In Shakespeare's play, from Hamlet's remarks it is understood that they are portrayed as two minor courtiers betraying their close friendship with Hamlet; actually, they are called "These tedious old fools" (2.2.683), by Hamlet, their old school friend. Unlike Stoppard, Shakespeare presents Ros and Guil as two foolish courtiers who become puppets between the intriguing plots of Claudius and Hamlet. Especially, Claudius handles them skillfully in order to get around Hamlet, an obvious menace for the crown. They are ordered to find out the reason for Hamlet's strange behaviour as his close friends since the old school days. However, in this manner, they do not show dedication to this close friendship, and instead of warning him about the corruption at the Danish Court and the King, they obey the commands of King Claudius, consider him the ideal representative of the

divine power, and flatter him as two minor courtiers. They are portrayed as the sycophantic agents of the King who exploits them in the matter of Hamlet. On the other hand, well-aware of Ros and Guil's insincerity and their manipulation by Claudius' plots, Hamlet frankly tells them "Sblood, do you think I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? . . . you cannot play upon me." (3.2.693) which is indicative of that he is not going to be deceived by his so-called friends. Furthermore, in the final act, Hamlet cautiously makes up his own plan as a self-defence and exchanges the letter. In Stoppard's play, by way of contrast, they are depicted as two innocents who "are mere instruments in someone else's plot" (Bennett 80). They appear to be the instruments of both the King and the Prince, but at a deeper level, they become the instruments of Shakespeare's plot. Against these controlling forces, they know their limits:

GUIL: [. . .] Spontaneity and whim are the order of the day. Other wheels are turning but they are not our concern. We can breathe. We can relax. We can do what we like and say what we like to whomever we like, without restriction.

ROS: Within limits, of course.

GUIL: Certainly within limits. (3.84)

From time to time, Stoppard prefers to present brief summaries of *Hamlet* from Ros and Guil's mouths. In many places in the play, Ros condenses what he comprehends from *Hamlet*'s plot:

ROS: To sum up: your father, whom you love, dies, you are his heir, you come back to find that hardly was the corpse cold before his young brother popped on to his throne and into his sheets, thereby offending both legal and natural practice. Now why exactly are you behaving in this extraordinary manner? (1.36)

ROS: Six rhetorical and two repetition, leaving nineteen of which we answered fifteen. And what did we get in return? He's depressed! . . . Denmark's a prison and he'd rather live in a nutshell; some shadow-play about the nature of ambition, which never got down to cases, and finally one direct question which might have led somewhere, and led in fact to his illuminating claim to tell a hawk from a handsaw. (2.41)

ROS: The position as I see it, then. We, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, from our young days brought up with him, awakened by a man standing on his saddle, are summoned, and arrived and are instructed to glean what afflicts him and draw him on to pleasures, such as a play, which unfortunately, as it turns out, is abandoned in some confusion owing to certain nuances outside our appreciation—which, among other causes, results in, among other effects, a high, not to say, homicidal, excitement in Hamlet, whom we, in consequence, are escorting, for his own good, to England. Good. We're on top of it now. (3.80)

On the other hand, like his previous sophisticated explanation for the phenomena, Guil, in his intellectual manner, gives a brief synopsis of Hamlet's strange behaviour as in the following:

GUIL: It really boils down to symptoms. Pregnant replies, mystic allusions, mistaken identities, arguing his father is his mother, that sort of thing; intimations of suicide, forgoing of exercise, loss of mirth, hints of claustrophobia not to say delusions of imprisonment; invocations of camels, chameleons, capons, whales, weasels, hawks, handsaws – riddles, quibbles and evasions; amnesia, paranoia, myopia; day-dreaming, hallucinations; stabbing his elders, abusing his parents, insulting his lover, and appearing hatless in public – knock-kneed, droop-stockinged and sighing like a love-sick schoolboy, which at his age is coming on a bit strong. (2.84-85)

This kind of summaries of *Hamlet* are not provided so as to inform the audience about *Hamlet*'s plot, but to remind Ros and Guil of the sequence of events in *Hamlet* in which they are not included, in addition to improve their inquiry in understanding Hamlet. These funny summaries also endorse the purpose of neutralising the sense of tragedy in Stoppard's play and creating the sense of humour in parallel to the playwright's intention to entertain the audience.

Playful treatment of intellectuality through intertextuality is a striking feature of Stoppard's writing. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Stoppard achieves intertextuality by using some dramatic techniques common in most of his plays like the play-within-the-play technique, dumbshows, rehearsals, direct asides to the audience which cause the alienation effect. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is a metadrama which informs the audience that they are watching a playworld. Moreover, the metadramatic plotting of the play is also felt by the characters. Stoppard makes Ros and Guil be aware of the fact that they are on a stage facing the audience, and the playwright reinforces their awareness by using asides. Ros' experimenting on the audience's reaction is a good example for this:

(A good pause. ROS leaps up and bellows at the audience.)

ROS: Fire!

(GUIL jumps up.)

GUIL: Where?

ROS: It's all right—I'm demonstrating the misuse of free speech. To prove that it exists. (He regards the audience, that is the direction, with contempt—and other

directions, then front again.) Not a move. They should burn to death in their shoes.
(2.43)

The fact that Ros and Guil sometimes behave as actors who are conscious of their being on stage, performing a play for the audience in front of them, accentuates the metadramatic structure of the play. In addition to this, although they are characters of a playworld, they frequently give reactions – that would probably be given by the audience – to the text they are entrapped in. It seems as if they represent the audience on stage. This situation is illustrated by Ros' remark, "Getting a bit of bore, isn't it?" (1.8), he makes upon the consecutive heads in the coin-tossing game. However, their conscious asides to the audience should not mislead us to the idea that the characters are fully conscious of the play. It is evident that they are not consciously onstage; they are performing a play which they do not know or comprehend.

Furthermore, the humour in language is what actually dominates the whole play. The sense of humour is obligatory to trivialise the solemnity of several issues that have been already mentioned in the previous pages of this thesis. About humour, Bigsby points out:

For Rosencrantz and Guildenstern themselves, humour is a means of preserving sanity; for Stoppard it is a natural product of disjunction—of the gulf between cause and effect, aspiration and fulfilment, word and meaning, which is the root alike of pain, absurdity, and laughter, and a clue to the relativity of truth, itself a subject to which Stoppard has repeatedly returned. (16)

Each time Ros and Guil play question games while they are off-stage characters, they also play with words by creating puns in a direct contrast to the fact that they are given the order to find out the reasons of Hamlet's strangeness. For instance, when they attempt to learn what Hamlet has done to Polonius' corpse, they call Hamlet as follows:

ROS: Give him a shout.
 GUIL: I thought we'd been into all that.
 ROS (*shouts*): Hamlet!
 GUIL: Don't be absurd.
 ROS (*shouts*): Lord Hamlet!
 (HAMLET *enters*. ROS *is a little dismayed*.)
 What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?
 HAMLET: Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin. (2.65-66)

The difference between the Shakespearean and Stoppardian language becomes evident in the above quotation in which Stoppard's insertion of the line "Don't be absurd!" into the genuine *Hamlet* dialogue arises humour (Brassell 42).

Stoppard's lighthearted manner in writing undermines the seriousness in his works. Although *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is based on two cornerstones of British drama, *Hamlet* and *Waiting for Godot*, a tragedy and an absurd play, Tom Stoppard has diminished the sense of seriousness through the intertextual ambushes and the humorous language he employs in the whole play. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* employs many dramatic techniques such as use of the play-within-the-play technique, allusive intersections, narrations, dumbshows, and direct asides to the audience which both ambush the audience and create the alienation effect. Stoppard not only constructs his play with various techniques, but also enriches the play with several philosophical and metaphysical themes, including the dualisms between life and death, illusion and reality, free choice and determinism, and man's entrapment in an incomprehensible world, alongside his loss of control and inability to change his life. However, he draws attention to Ros and Guil's bafflement rather than the serious matters of life. His choice of combining frivolity with seriousness persists in his second major play, *Travesties* which is going to be analysed in depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II: *TRAVESTIES*

Travesties, like his earlier *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Jumpers*, is one of Tom Stoppard's early masterpieces. This play is highly significant for Stoppard's use of miscellaneous theatrical devices accompanied with multiple viewpoints around the central subjects of art and revolution. It abounds in several confrontations from different aspects, since the work as a whole is an embodiment of Stoppard's view that writing dialogues is a way of confronting oneself. Most significantly, these confrontations come out from the foggy memories of an old narrator who merges reality with illusion and narrates historical events within the plot of Oscar Wilde's well-known play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Therefore, the controlling element in the play is the narrator, and the play is indeed the incessant monologue of an old man.

As a beginning point, it is appropriate to briefly analyse of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a comedy of manners which is a kind of comedy usually identified with the Restoration Drama of the seventeenth century, particularly dealing with the social and moral behaviours of the upper-middle class. The most common features of this kind of comedy are its witty language, its satirisation of the stereotypical upper-middle class characters and their social habits, and its foremost interest in love and marriage. With *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde revives the seventeenth century Restoration comedy in the Victorian age. He makes fun of the frivolities and mannerisms of Victorian high society and ridicules the characters who have conventional behaviours like Algernon Moncrieff, a young sophisticated man having no job, or, Lady Bracknell, a woman of her age in demand of a rich husband for her daughter. While doing this, Wilde is more interested in form rather than the content. The play is described as a farcical comedy due to its incessant activity including amusing exaggerations, sudden coincidences, slapstick actions and mistaken identities.

Furthermore, the title of the play satirises the supposed "earnestness" in Victorian society, for, instead of virtue and humanity, it paradoxically evokes meanings like materialism, hypocrisy and vanity. For Bentley, Wilde's play "is about *earnestness*, that is, Victorian solemnity, that kind of false seriousness which means hypocrisy,

priggishness, and lack of irony” (111). The concept of love in Wilde’s play is also hypocritical. Ironically, the love couples fall in love without even seeing each other, and especially Gwendolen and Cecily deliberately prefer to fall in love with a man whose name is “Ernest.” The irony in the word “earnest” referring to both the importance of being called “Ernest” and the importance of being earnest, is clearly illustrated with Jack’s final words at the very end of the play: “[. . .] I’ve now realized for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest” (3.1667). Indeed, an early title of the play, *A Trivial Comedy for Serious People* (Orlich 371), describes Wilde’s intention while writing the play: “It has as its philosophy [. . .] that we should treat all the trivial things of life seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality” (qtd. in Abrams *Norton* 2:1628). Besides, the paradox in the philosophy of the play is actually the tip of the iceberg in Wilde’s personal philosophy as he confesses in *De Profundis* (1905), “[. . .] I treated art as the supreme reality and life as a mere mode of fiction [. . .]” (qtd. in Abrams *Norton* 2:1617). Wilde’s above quoted remark reminds one of Stoppard’s statements: “Plays are the people who write them. Seriousness compromised by frivolity” (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 65). Here, Wilde’s philosophy has an obvious affinity with that of Stoppard in terms of trivialising seriousness. Indeed, Tom Stoppard has had a longstanding admiration for Wilde since his early years in journalism in Bristol when he reviewed many of Wilde’s plays (Dean 76). In *Travesties*, as a reflection of Stoppard’s own admiration for Wilde, both Joyce and Carr respect Wilde because of his belief in art for art’s sake (Dean 76).

Travesties exemplifies Stoppard’s chief intention to contrive “the perfect marriage between the play of ideas and farce or perhaps even high comedy” (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 63). Like scales, the play balances the intellectual concepts of art and revolution with a ridiculous presentation of travesties, humorous wordplays and limericks. While concerned with the theories of art and revolution, Stoppard at the same time puts humour on a pedestal. On Stoppard’s humorous style, Zeifman claims: “*Travesties* is Stoppard at his most verbally dazzling” with his use of “puns of all manner” (“Tomfoolery” 85). Accordingly, Bareham suggests that “never again has a major play of his been quite dominated by punning since *Travesties*” (22). Gold, within this framework, suggests: “The stylistic and thematic ventures proceed in tandem, as

Stoppard harks back to the plays of Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw [. . .]. And in so doing he writes a new chapter in the history of comedy of ideas.” (184). In comparison to Wilde’s comedy of manners “emptied of content – politically, emotionally, and philosophically” (Gold 185), Stoppard’s *Travesties* is full of intellectual debates on serious matters like Wilde’s contemporary dramatist Shaw’s “drama of ideas” based entirely on discussions. To take an obvious example, Gold makes a comparison between Henry Carr and Tristan Tzara’s political debates on fighting in the war and the conflict between the Devil and Don Juan in George Bernard Shaw’s *Man and Superman* (1904). In Shaw’s play, the Devil believes that there is violence in man’s nature, and that man is

the inventor of the rack, the stake, the gallows, the electric chair: of sword and gun and poison gas: above all, of justice, duty, patriotism and all the other isms by which even those who are clever enough to be humanely disposed are persuaded to become the most destructive of all destroyers. (3.621)

Similarly, in Stoppard’s play, Tzara believes: “*Patriotism, duty, love, freedom*, king and country [. . .] – and honour – all the traditional sophistries for waging wars of expansion and self-interest, [are] presented to the people in the guise of rational argument set to patriotic hymns” (1.39). Both Don Juan’s and Carr’s replies to these statements are similar as Don Juan suggests that man always wins when he fights for an idea and as Carr advocates his fighting for “*duty*,” “*patriotism*” and “*love of freedom*” (1.40) (Gold 186). Therefore, in the light of Gold’s criticism, it seems remarkable that Tom Stoppard juxtaposes Wildean farce with Shavian debate in his play. However, here, it is essential to briefly compare Stoppard and Shaw which Stoppard himself did once in an interview: “Shaw raises conversation to the power of drama, and he does it for three acts. I sometimes do it for three pages, though the tone is very different; but my theatrical impulses are flashier” (qtd. in Guppy 188). Thus, it cannot be disregarded that in Stoppard’s drama, the form, not the subject matter, is a focus of interest. Therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that though his play is a qualified one with serious subject matters like the Marxist Revolution, Dadaism, art and history, Stoppard’s concentration is primarily on the style. He fills his play with Joycean pastiches, Wildean wordplays, Shavian dialogues, Brechtian techniques and Pirandellian frame plays. As Whitaker

argues, “[t]he mode of *Travesties* itself results from a fusion of Wildean farce, Joycean fiction, Dadaist spontaneous negation, epic theatre, and Shavian dialectic” (197).

The development of *Travesties* in Stoppard’s mind dates back to the time when *Jumpers* was produced. He, then, in an interview, informs Mel Gussow that he is going to write a play, “a two act thing, with one act a Dadaist play on communist ideology, and the other an ideological functional drama about Dadaists” (32 “Stoppard”). Yet the outcome would be rather different from what he has intended to produce, as he would also include characters like Joyce and Carr in the play. However, the conspicuous phenomenon that Lenin’s having significant ideas on art while Tzara’s having significant ideas on revolution in the play is an evidence of the intention Stoppard had when he first started writing *Travesties*. Getting information that in 1916, during World War I, James Joyce, Tristan Tzara, and Vladimir Ulyanov Lenin were all in Zurich at the same time, he later on develops the play (Guppy 189). Stoppard manages to get John Wood’s promise to perform the leading role in his next play; however, he later on realises that Wood does not physically suit either Lenin or Tzara or Joyce. He also maintains the idea that the trio has to have equal parts and coincidences with Henry Carr in Ellmann’s biography of Joyce, *James Joyce* (1959), as a role for Wood (Kerensky 86). Also, his discovery of the historical fact that Joyce and Carr disputed over money for the costumes and tickets in a production of Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* in Zurich, provides Stoppard with the linking issue.

As Stoppard said, *Travesties* “asks whether the words ‘revolutionary’ and ‘artist’ are capable of being synonymous, or whether they are mutually exclusive, or something in between.” (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 63). Generally, most of the critics analyse the three revolutionary characters in the play, Joyce, Lenin, and Tzara, with complete attention to their opposing views on art and revolution. Gabrielle S. Robinson focuses on the presentation of the three opposing standpoints represented by Joyce, Lenin, and Tzara, while giving Carr “the role of a spectator” (42). Philip Roberts states that the problem in the play “is stated dogmatically in three forms” by the trio (90). However, according to another critic, Dean, in *Travesties*, there are “four distinct views on art” introduced through the travestied characters of Joyce, Tzara, Lenin and Carr. Joyce

believes that art should not be concerned with politics or social issues; Tzara advocates the Dadaist anti-art; Lenin believes in the utility of art for the benefits of society, notably for the Marxist revolution; and Carr represents “the bourgeois view of art” (Dean 77). Though, later Dean states that Carr oddly supports some of Joyce’s statements about art and in particular about Wilde, by using them in his argument with Cecily in the second act, rather than his own personal statements. Subsequently, Carr’s standpoint, as Rod argues, is as invaluable as any character’s in the play since he has “an independent position of his own, a position which rejects the various idealisms of Tzara, Joyce and Lenin in favor of a practical consideration of what art has been and what it has accomplished” (182). Some critics chiefly focus on the two opposing sides, that is, Lenin and Joyce and their conflicting views on the function of art, despite the fact that Lenin and Joyce never directly argue with each other in the play. For instance, according to Bigsby, the play is about the opposite extremes of the debate between Joyce who supports art for art’s sake and Lenin who supports art as a social criticism, and the debate is mediated by the Dadaist Tzara who is drawn in both directions (25). Nonetheless, it is crucial to consider the situation as it appears in Carr’s controlling memory. The reality of Carr’s making travesty of three historical figures in his mind is so conspicuous that in his narrator seat, he introduces them as “James Joyce As I Knew Him” (1.22), “Lenin As I Knew Him” (1.23), “Memories of Dada by a Consular Friend of the Famous in Old Zurich: A Sketch” (1.25) which comes to mean that they are “totally fictionalized, ‘subjective’ characters, dramatic agents representing forces of [his] memory” (Cooke 209). Conclusively, the debate among these opposing views is reflected through the unthrustworthy recollections of an old man, Henry Carr.

Most of the play is dominated by the blurred memory of Henry Carr, who assumes himself to be the British Consul in Zurich in 1918, inspite of the historical fact, written by Stoppard himself in the Programme Note of the play, that he was actually a minor official at the British Consulate. In relation to this, Dean makes a comparative assessment: “Like Ros and Guil, the historic Carr [. . .] played a nearly insignificant role in this momentous political situation, although he did play the pivotal role of Algernon in a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* arranged by Joyce in Zurich” (76). Like other Stoppardian characters who have an unimportant place in comparison to the

other people surrounding them in their lives, Henry Carr is a minor figure at the Consulate in Zurich, the city where many significant writers, artists and revolutionaries who ran away from the tremendous effect of World War I had settled during that time and where the political chaos caused various intellectual controversies.

Travesties is a metadrama full of intertextual borrowings. It is a play consisting of a narration about a performance of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* during the war time. Stoppard sets a play within a frame play and enhances the theatrical and textual consciousness of the audience by asides. He uses some familiar techniques seen in his other plays such as asides and the play-within-the-play technique which intensify the audience's consciousness of the intertextual quality of the play. One of the most prevalent devices of metadramatic plotting in the play is aside in which a monologue or a word of an actor is addressed to the audience so as to alert the audience on the illusiveness of the play. As already studied in the previous chapter, this is also called the "A-effect" in Brechtian theatre or epic theatre. In *Travesties*, the narration as both an aside and a soliloquy, dissolves the fourth wall in the theatre and improves the metadramatic quality since it requires a narrator and an audience at least. Carr's narration of the whole play as the reflection of his own recollections and the audience's witnessing the dramatisation of the narration by the travesties of historical characters works for Stoppard's intention. Furthermore, the metadramatic quality becomes evident at times when an interaction occurs between the narrator and the audience. For instance, Carr's consciousness of the existence of the audience in their seats sometimes urges him to inform them about what he is going to tell next: "In fact, anybody hanging on just for the cheap comedy of senile confusion might as well go because now I'm on to how I met Lenin and could have changed the course of history etcetera" (1.64).

The title is congenial to the play for many reasons. For Rod, the play travesties "both the literature and the lives it is based on" (194). Through Henry Carr's recollections, a number of travesties are presented. First of all, the fictionalisation of historical figures is accomplished by making travesties of them for stage. Secondly, the incessant debates of the travesties about art and its function, curtails the impact of aesthetic theories to the level of an abusive language. Thirdly, the action in the play is "the travesty of human

existence [. . .] that found dramatic life in, among others, the plays of Oscar Wilde” (Dean 76). Finally, its plot is a travesty of Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Dean 76). Thus, through Carr, literary styles, works and historical figures are conveyed in the form of travesty.

The setting of the play is also appropriate to the intertextual quality. The play opens in the reference section of the Zurich Public Library in 1917. All the characters in the play are engaged in producing new works by using the reference books in the library. Tzara creates his Dadaist poems by cutting words from Shakespeare’s eighteenth sonnet; Joyce creates his *Ulysses* (1922) by juxtaposing Homer’s *Odyssey* with Dublin’s City Guide dated 1904; Lenin studies on his book *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) while constantly reading other sources on economics in the library. It can also be claimed that the narrator of the play, Carr, by re-writing history and by borrowing from Wilde’s play, creates a play in his mind in which he becomes the protagonist. The characters’ productivity comes from their recreating new works from other writers’ previous works. As Cooke puts it, “they are all makers” who compose their works through intertextuality, and “whether the products are novels, histories, or dadaist poems, the process is the same” (202). In the play, all the characters’ recreation of new works from the old ones is actually what their playwright is accustomed to doing. In Stoppard’s theatre, *Travesties* is the first play in which the characters, just like its playwright, make use of parody and pastiche. It can be claimed that by means of the characters in the play Stoppard reflects his own writing techniques. According to Gold, Tzara’s pastiche in the play becomes “a metaphor for Stoppard’s methods” (189). Tzara’s creation process is achieved by taking out words from the hat at random. Similarly, Stoppard creates the whole play by taking references from other writers’ works. The whole play consists of pastiches of the coincidental union of three historical figures, foggy recollections of an old man, several literary works, time shiftings, magical illusions, a striptease scene, spying and disguisings.

In Stoppard’s own definition of the play in the Programme Note,

Travesties is a work of fiction which makes use, and misuse, of history. Scenes which are self-evidently documentary mingle with others which are just evidently

fantastical. People who were hardly aware of each other's existence are made to collide; real people and imaginary people are brought together without ceremony; and events which took place months, and even years, apart are presented as synchronous. (qtd. in Bareham 162)

Stoppard merges each essential element that he gains in the light of his readings. He unites different elements through pastiche and parody. As for his readings from other writers' works, he presents a long list of his intertextual sources that he would like to make acknowledgement:

Nearly everything spoken by Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaya herein comes from his Collected Writings and from her *Memories of Lenin*. I have also profited variously—and gratefully—from the following books: *Lenin* by Michael C. Morgan; *Lenin* by Robert Payne; and *Lenin the Bolsheviks* by Adam B. Ulam; *To the Finland Station* by Edmund Wilson; *Days With Lenin* by Maxim Gorki; *The First World War, an Illustrated History* by A.J.P. Taylor; *James Joyce* by Richard Ellman; *Joyce* by John Gross; *Dada, Art and Anti-Art* by Hans Richter; and *The Dada Painters and Poets*, edited by Robert Motherwell. I am also indebted to Mr. James Klugman for material relating to Lenin in Switzerland. The responsibility for the use to which this and all other material is put is my own. (Stoppard *Travesties* 15)

The intertextuality in Stoppard's play is manifest due to its references to Wilde's play, Tzara's Dadaist poetry, Joyce's novel, Lenin's historical letters and manifestoes. The works of other literary or historical figures are employed as a means of travesty in order to enhance the sense of humour in *Travesties*. Not only the written texts but also music – classical and popular – are used for the playwright's intention. To take an obvious example, Stoppard prefers using Beethoven's "Appassionata" during Lenin's sophisticated speech in the undertone, while he prefers using "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean" with the entrance of manservant Bennett during the other characters' music-hall dialogues.

Another intertextual source provides Stoppard with the protagonist of his play. Thanks to Richard Ellman's biography of Joyce, Tom Stoppard develops the role of the storyteller which is vitally important for most part of the play. Carr's historical connection with Joyce is documented in Richard Ellman's biography of Joyce (137). Historically, Carr and Joyce met when Carr was chosen for the role of Algernon in a Zurich production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and after the production they

disputed over financial reasons. Carr demanded money for the costume he had bought for his role, and Joyce demanded money for the tickets that Carr had sold. Eventually, Carr sued Joyce. All these historical events made Joyce take revenge from Carr in his own way: through literature. Joyce takes revenge by fictionalising Carr within the Circe episode of *Ulysses*, as a foulmouthed drunken soldier, Private Carr who, with regard to his superior officer Bennett, utters such words as: “God fuck old Bennett! He’s a whitearsed bugger, I don’t give a shit for him” (525).

Henry Carr’s performing the role of Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* determines the flow of his narration. He erratically organises his connection with the other historical characters, and reacts to them in his mind according to Wilde’s overwhelming play as if everything occurred within the plot of Wilde’s play. The erratic organisation of historical events is a consequence of not only his old age but also his subjectivity. He is an old man with an unreliable memory, and he narrates history from his own perspective. The history is re-written within the borders of the limiting plot of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. For Cooke, the play is “an optical illusion in that Stoppard makes Carr’s memory present to us”; Carr becomes “a maker, unifying random and historically unconnected sense experiences into the form of a play” (207). Likewise, Brassell’s description of Carr’s role in the play is “roughly that of the pseudo-biographer” (137). Thanks to Carr, the historical characters and events are metamorphosed into a number of travesties. Furthermore, the travesties of both real life and fictitious characters appear on stage as reflections, distorted by a blurred mind, and they dramatise their roles determined by this blurred mind. For this reason, Carr becomes both the playwright and the player in *Travesties*.

During the linear sequence of Carr’s narration, there are some frozen moments. The flow of events is divided, and instead of action, “words/monologues” become foreground. For instance, in these monologues, Old Carr narrates what has happened in the past, and while doing this, he tries to give a perfect title to each of his narrations. Within the framework of a dissatisfying life, Bigsby argues, Old Carr’s attempt to reconstruct his past resembles Samuel Beckett’s character, Krapp, who prefers to record the expectations of his youth in a tape-recorder in order to listen to them in the later

years of his life in *Krapp's Last Tape* (1957) (29). Additionally, the time-slips become obvious in Carr's narration. While telling about his experiences in the past, like a broken tape-recorder, he sometimes turns back to the beginning. Each time this happens, he starts narrating from another perspective by remembering the events differently from his previous narration. As a case in point, in the scene where Carr is in the company of his manservant Bennett, which is also a reflection of Algernon's conversation with his manservant Lane in Wilde's play, Carr begins his monologue for five times, each beginning with Bennett's repeated words: "I have put the newspapers and telegrams on the sideboard, sir" (1.26). These time-slips make Boireau, a critic, focus on the play's "re-echoing and repeating itself like an old record" and comment as follows: "[t]he repeating the act of performing subverts the naturalistic conventions of representation" (141); to put it differently, this kind of repetitiveness in the performance brings about the alienation effect.

Stoppard reminds the audience of the unreliability of Carr's memoirs with the help of some devices. By means of flashbacks in Carr's mind, the audience have the opportunity to witness both the past and the present. In order to underline Carr's erratic mind, Stoppard deliberately presents two different characters: Young Carr and Old Carr, in addition to presenting two travesties of Carr: Young Carr who is a fashionable elegant official and Old Carr who is "trying to live down the humiliation of Joyce's treatment by telling his story in his memoirs" (Dean 77). Old Carr, as the narrator of the play and the author of his memoirs, has the control in his hands and narrates the events and the characters on his own benefits. Aware of his having the control of the play, he sometimes boasts of his "successful" performance of the role Algernon in his youth. However, his recollections are unreliable as Stoppard states in the stage directions:

A note on the above: the scene (and most of the play) is under the erratic control of Old Carr's memory, which is not notably reliable, and also of his various prejudices and delusions. One result is that the story (like a toy train perhaps) occasionally jumps the rails and has to be restarted at the point where it goes wild.
(1.27)

Even Old Carr himself confesses that he might have remembered some of the details quite wrongly, due to his old age:

Incidentally, you may or may not have noticed that I got my wires crossed a bit here and there, you know how it is when the old think-box gets stuck in a groove and before you know where you are you've jumped the points and suddenly you think, No, steady on, old chap, that was Algernon—*Algernon!*—There you are—all coming back now, I've got it straight, I'll be all right from here on. (1.64)

History undergoes a drastic change inside Carr's mind in which reality and imagination are intermingled. The output of the remembering process is rather unreliable: Carr remembers his young self as the British Consul who is always in connection with significant artists and revolutionaries belonging to the élité class of Zurich at that time. His narration is full of contradictions, incongruities, inaccurate quotations and puns. At this point, Bigsby makes a remarkable commentary on the inaccuracy of Carr's memoirs with reference to Oscar Wilde:

In 'The Critic as Artist', Oscar Wilde remarks of memoirs that they are 'generally written by people who have either entirely lost their memories, or have never done anything worth remembering'. This proves all too accurate a description of Carr's memoirs, which tend to confuse his own fictions with those of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in which he had once scored a minor success. (25)

The inaccuracy in Carr's memoirs helps Stoppard to fulfill his aim of mocking the three famous historical figures and their ideas while destroying the credibility of history and the seriousness of three distinct views. His subjective narration also trivialises the serious events in history, that is, the realities of World War I as well as the Russian Revolution, in other words, the Bloody October. On the same issue, Bigsby draws a similarity between Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties* in terms of their protagonists' points of view: "Just as *Hamlet*, viewed through the eyes of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, is drained of tragic meaning, so too this clash of ideas loses much of its urgency seen from the perspective of a deluded, prejudiced and erratic minor functionary" (25).

Above all, Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, had such an influence over Old Carr's life that he almost always recounts his pseudo-memories mingling them with Wilde's play in which he once played the central role. Here, Stoppard gains the opportunity to develop his own play in a parallel line to Wilde's play by borrowing distinguished quotations and the plot structure from Wilde's play. In addition to this,

Carr's narration gives Stoppard the chance to arrange the characters of *Travesties* in parallel to the cast of Wilde's play:

Algernon Moncrieff	Henry Carr
John Worthing	Tristan Tzara
Lane	Bennett
Aunt Augusta (Lady Bracknell)	James Joyce
Gwendolen Fairfax	Gwendolen Carr
Cecily Cardew	Cecily Carruthers

(Brassell 139).

As Brassell remarks, "the concept of setting characters within borrowed cultural patterns plainly owes much to Joyce, since *Ulysses* – in the use of *The Odyssey* – provides the archetype for this kind of structure" (139). In *Ulysses*, Joyce sets his characters, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, and the single day they spend in Dublin within the episodic structure of Homer's *The Odyssey*. Like Joyce, Stoppard, in *Travesties*, contextualises characters in the borrowed plot of another writer's literary work. Indeed, as already studied in the first chapter of this thesis, Stoppard has previously organised his first major play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* according to *Hamlet*'s plot.

Precisely, taking a historical fact into account, that is, Carr's role of Algernon, Stoppard designs the full cast of his play. The stylish Worthing, who always argues with Algernon, parallels to the most colourful revolutionary character of the play, Tzara, and that is why Stoppard puts the Dadaist Tzara in opposition to the bourgeois Carr. Brassell writes about two significant coincidences in the names of the characters: the actor playing Worthing in the Zurich production was indeed named Tristan and that Joyce was in reality mis-registered at birth as "James Augusta" (in error for Augustine) (139). Stoppard in his play intentionally gives Bennett, the real British Consul in 1918, the role of Carr's servant, as an irony. Additionally, he directly borrows the first names of the female characters from Wilde and appropriates them into Carr's story. Gwendolen becomes Carr's sister and Joyce's secretary, and Cecily becomes the librarian and Lenin's secretary. By means of the female characters, Stoppard is enabled to not only

manipulate the love affairs in Wilde's comedy of manners, but also enhance the debates on art and social politics.

Similar to Wilde's comedy of manners, in Stoppard's play, there are also love affairs between the characters. However, the debates on art can sometimes be an impediment to their love affairs. For instance, Tzara falls in love with Gwen who favors Joyce's work of art and detests Dadaism. For that reason, he introduces himself not as Tzara the Dadaist, but as his brother Jack Tzara. Similarly, Carr, the supporter of bourgeois art, falls in love with Cecily, the supporter of Lenin and his political views on art (Dean 77).

As another matter of fact, in Stoppard's play, the character Miss Prism of Wilde's play does not directly appear. Her role in *The Importance of Being Earnest* as Cecily's teacher is assumed by Lenin in *Travesties*. Besides, her switching of the baby, which takes place twenty-eight years before the action of Wilde's play begins, is echoed by the exchanging of folders in Stoppard's play (Whitaker 198). Above all, her name "Prism" appears as a metaphor in Stoppard's play. According to Peter Wood, who has directed all of Stoppard's full length plays since 1972 (Hayman "Double" 146), Stoppard has considered to call the play "Prism," as it presents everything "prismatically" through Carr's recollections (qtd. in Whitaker 197). Accordingly, Whitaker suggests that "*Travesties* refracts our approach to history, art, and revolution through the triangular prism of Joyce-Tzara-and-Lenin, refracts it again through Carr's memory, and again through Stoppard's own multifaceted parody" (197-8).

Stoppard makes a parody of the metaphor of prism in the play. Apparently, the prism and its consequence, that is the rainbow effect, plays a great role in the flow of the play, as observed in the conversation between Tzara and Joyce on art (Whitaker 198). During their conversation, the topic comes a point where the Dadaist Tzara demands for "the right to urinate in different colours," which briefly explains the Dadaist manifesto, and Joyce asks: "Each person in different colours at different times, or different people in each colour all the time? Or everybody multi-coloured every time?" (1.61). Even a simple matter like urination turns out to be a serious matter within their conversation through a prismatic view to the problem of making poetry or art by means of different

styles, just like the whole play refracts the discussions on different views referring to the relativity of truth.

In the play, the comedy arises mostly from the characterisation of the trio – Tzara, Joyce and Lenin – as well as that of Carr. These characters' unusual behaviours and reactions surprise, even shock the audience. Especially, the travesty of Tzara is the most colourfully depicted one among the trio. He is full of vitality, and like a dynamic baby, he can say “da-da” for successive times and compose new poems from old ones at random. Tom Stoppard introduces him as “a Rumanian nonsense” (1.32) in the stage directions and makes him speak with a German accent in his second scene in the play: “Plaizure, plaizure! What else? Eating as usual, I see 'Enri?! – 'allo – 'allo, vhat is all the teapots etcetera? Somebody comink? It is Gwendolen I hopp! – I luff 'er, 'Enri – I have come by tram expressly to propose a marriage – ah – ha! – ” (1.32).

Due to this characterisation, Tzara resembles Wilde's sophisticated dandies, and according to Brassell, he is the one who is most effectively woven into the Wildean story (154). Similarly, Stoppard portrays the travesty of James Joyce, the preminent Irish writer, as “an Irish nonsense” (1.33) who speaks in limericks in some parts of the play. Lenin's characterisation is quite different from that of the other two in the sense that he is less travestied by Stoppard. Instead, Stoppard chiefly prefers to make a travesty of his historical speeches which will be later in this chapter discussed in a detailed analysis of a few quotations taken from the play. Conclusively, all the three significant figures in literary and political history, the real life figure Carr, and the literary characters Cecily and Gwen are colourfully travestied by the playwright. In relation to this, Bareham observes: “While all the characters are travesties of themselves, they also attempt to subordinate one another to travesty by insulting in every occasion” (21). During their debates, for example, Carr and Tzara respectively insult each other:

CARR: My God, you little Rumanian wog – you bloody dago – you jumped-up phrase-making smart-alecy arty-intellectual Balkan turd!!! Think you know it all!” (1.40)

[. . .]

TZARA: My God, you bloody English philistine – you ignorant smart-arse bogus bourgeois Anglo-Saxon prick! (1.47)

As another example, Tzara's insulting Joyce with high temperament at the very end of their conversation can be given. Tzara says: "By God, you supercilious streak of Irish puke! You four-eyed, bog ignorant, potato-eating ponce! Your art has failed" (1.62).

As seen, the characters insult each other on many occasions in order to impose their superiority over the other. However, it is also essential to distinguish Joyce and Lenin from the others as they never directly swear at the others. For instance, following the above quotation, Joyce does not reply Tzara with a swear word, but with his epigrammatic speech and calmly continues the debate just like he does throughout the rest of the play. Additionally, the travesty of Joyce sometimes puns on the other travesties with his witty limericks. Early in the play, he draws a funny picture of Tzara in his limerick:

A Rumanian rhymer I met
used a system he based on roulette.
His reliance on chance
was a def'nite advance
and yet . . . and yet . . . and yet . . . (1.35)

As for Lenin, he never directly speaks with the other characters except for Nadya and Cecily. As most of his speeches are addressed to the audience, Lenin does not overtly insult the others or their views, but by making propoganda of Marxism, he tries to overwhelm the other standpoints so as to assert his superiority. The feeling of superiority does not particularly belong to Lenin but to all the other characters in the play. The feeling of superiority in Stoppard's characters echoes another vice in Wilde's class-conscious characters: the esteem for vanity and prestige. In Stoppard's play, since each of them think the most prestigious one is themselves, the characters attempt to establish superiority over each other through their distinct proclamations. Their selfishness and egotism are demonstrated in Carr's words, "a degree of self-absorption that would have glazed over the eyes of Narcissus" (1.38). In this aspect, Orlich suggests that in Stoppard's play, "virtue disappears from the stage and humanitarian concerns are out of place among the exiles' intellectual circle: in their dazzling display of verbal fireworks, insensibility is a comic and assumed "vice," their historical distinction and a badge of prestige" (372). To put it differently, both Wilde's and Stoppard's approach to characterisation are based on parody and paradox.

As already studied in the introduction, Stoppard is famous for the remarkable opening scenes in most of his plays. The opening of *Travesties* also belongs to this group of plays due to its perplexing effect on the audience: in a library, three major historical figures – who are more likely to be seen as caricatured characters – studying on their works, creating a chaotic atmosphere with their conflicting statements crashing in the air. Tzara composes some incomprehensible poetry in Dadaist fashion by cutting slips of paper from books and arranging them at random; Joyce dictates to Gwen, the secretary, an episode of *Ulysses*, “Oxen of the Sun”; Lenin talks about the news of the revolution in Russia while writing his book on imperialism. Joyce and Lenin’s own folders including their studies are exchanged accidentally when their secretaries Gwen and Cecily drop the folders on the floor and take the wrong folder. Joyce and Lenin say their excuses in three different languages, French, German and Italian, in succession. Within this chaotic atmosphere, Brassell argues that the quality of Joyce’s poetry is never brought into focus and actually bracketed with Tzara’s nonsensical poetry composed with words at random (146):

Eel ate enormous appletzara
key dairy chef’s hat he’ll learn oomparah!
Ill raced alas whispers kill later nut east,
noon avuncular ill day Clara! (1.18)

Indeed, his bizarre poem has a meaning, and he defines himself through this Dadaist poem. Its words sound French, and the translation in both French and English are as follows:

Il est énorme, s’appelle Tzara
Qui dérêchef se hâte. Hilare nonpareil!
Il rest à la Suisse parcequ’il est un artiste.
“Nous n’avons que l’art,” il déclara!

He is larger-than-life, is called Tzara,
Who rushes headlong once again. Peerless jokester!
He stays in Switzerland because he is an artist.
“We have only art!” were his words. (Londrè 168)

In the first place, Tzara’s poetry cancels the importance of Joyce’s *Ulysses* and its episode “Oxen of the Sun”, which Joyce simultaneously dictates to Gwen: “Send us bright one, light one, Horhorn, quickening and wombfruit” (1.18). Indeed, the

importance of these words comes from their being parodies of English proses which are conventionally about the birth of a baby (Whitaker 195). Shortly afterwards, the first argument in the play takes place between Joyce and Tzara. Although both of them are seen doing nonsensical art, they reject each other's views on art. Tzara rejects Joyce's traditional art whereas Joyce claims that he is a "fine writer who writes caviar for the general, hence poor" (1.33). Ironically, Stoppard includes his argument in limericks so as to both ridicule the characters and make parody of Joyce's style. Carr's standpoint in this first debate is a detached one as he favors neither Tzara nor Joyce, nor their nonsensical behaviours, as Carr is a bourgeois man of commonsense. Moreover, the argument between Tzara and Joyce helps us to recognise Carr's perspective to these conflicting views on art, and so, to differentiate his standpoint.

The following scene, in which Carr and Tzara are seen discussing about their personal views on art, is a travesty of Jack and Algernon's dialogue in Wilde's play. As a revolutionary Dadaist, Tzara advocates the destruction of all the traditional means of expression as well as the destruction of art. So, he makes a re-definition of an artist: "Nowadays, an artist is someone who makes art mean the things he does. A man may be an artist by exhibiting his hindquarters. He may be a poet by drawing words out of a hat" (1.38). However, Carr argues that labelling a non-artistic work art does not make the work artistic. He also rejects Tzara's re-definition of an artist due to his traditionalist point of view: "An artist is someone who is gifted in some way that enables him to do something more or less well which can only be done badly or not at all by someone who is not thus gifted" (1.38).

Tzara also supposes that as the war has made everything meaningless and worthless, art should be also like that, and he stands against "the clever people" who impose "design" or "art" as an invaluable thing, despite his own assessment of art as nonsense:

TZARA: Oh, what nonsense you talk!

CARR: It may be nonsense, but at least it is clever nonsense.

TZARA: I am sick of cleverness. The clever people try to impose a design on the world and when it goes calamitiously wrong they call it fate. In point of fact, everything is Chance, including design.

CARR: That sounds awfully clever. What does it mean? Not that it has to mean anything, of course.

TZARA: It means, my dear Henry, that the causes we know everything about depend on causes we know very little about, which depend on causes we know absolutely nothing about. And it is the duty of the artist to jeer and howl and belch at the delusion that infinite generations of real effects can be inferred from the gross expression of apparent cause.

CARR: It is the duty of the artist to beautify existence.

TZARA (*articulately*): Dada dada dada [. . .] dada.

CARR (*slight pause*): Oh, what nonsense you talk!

TZARA: It may be nonsense, but at least it's not clever nonsense. Cleverness has been exploded, along with so much else, by the war. (1.38)

Carr ironically appraises Tzara's antipathy of cleverness by finding it also "awfully clever" (1.38). Like Algernon's persistence in labelling "nonsense" each opinion conflicting with his own, Carr uses this allusive word to confront others' opinions. He especially labels art "clever nonsense" which simply expresses a utilitarian purpose: to bring delight to man's life. Here, with his standpoint he differs from both Tzara who endorses the function of art for the improvement of man's living standards and Joyce who favors art purely for its artistic purpose.

Nevertheless, Tzara is also conscious of the function of art in one's life, that is, how it improves man's living:

When the strongest began to fight for the tribe, and the fastest to hunt, it was the artist who became the priest-guardian of the magic that conjured the intelligence out of the appetites. Without him, man would be a coffee-mill. Eat – grind – shit. Hunt – *eat* – fight – *grind* – saw the logs – *shit*. The difference between being a man and being a coffee-mill is art. (1.47)

However, Carr does not assign a value to art. For him, being an artist precludes man from concerning more serious issues like politics and war. He believes: "to be an artist *at all* is like living in Switzerland during a world war" (1.38). Further, in his view, the importance of being an artist is exaggerated not only by artists but also by everyone. For him, this kind of an excessive respect for art and artists is unnecessary:

CARR: . . . Revolution in art is in no way connected with *class* revolution. Artists are members of a privileged class. Art is absurdly overrated by artists, which is understandable, but what is strange is that it is absurdly overrated by everyone else [. . .] What is an artist? For every thousand people there's nine hundred doing the work, ninety doing well, nine doing good, and one lucky bastard who's the artist. (1.46)

The relationship between Joyce and Carr, in the first act, begins with Joyce's proposal to Carr to take the role of Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which he calls a "quintessential English jewel" (1.51). Having heard the name of the play, Carr sincerely reveals his reluctance to participate in the play and says: "I don't know it. But I've heard of it and I don't like it. It is a play written by an Irish [. . .] Gomorrhahist" (1.51) referring to the trial of Wilde charging him of sodomy. Later, in the second act, Cecily overestimates Wilde's play like Carr has done in the first act, saying: "I don't know it. But I've heard of it and I don't like it. It is a play written by an Irish-coxcomb and bugbear of the Home Rule sodality, so I hear" (2.74). In many parts of the play, the characters oppose one another through statements parallel to others' statements and through the witty use of allusions. To be more specific, this can be observed in the scene of Joyce and Carr's first encounter: Joyce, having offered Carr the role of Algernon, antagonistically quotes Jack Worthing's lines from *The Importance of Being Earnest*: "I may occasionally be a little overdressed but I make up for it by being immensely overeducated" (1.52). While discussing the function of art with Cecily, Carr changes this quotation: "Wilde was indifferent to politics. He may occasionally have been a little overdressed but he made up for it by being immensely uncommitted" (2.74). These parallel statements are important to distinguish how Carr praises Wilde and Joyce, for their beliefs in uncommitted art (Dean 82).

Although Carr prefers Gilbert and Sullivan to Oscar Wilde who has a reputation as an immoral person, he accepts the role on condition that he dresses fashionable clothes in the leading role. On account of Carr's severe obsession with the costume that he would wear in the performance, Joyce even offers to alter "a mere line or two of dialogue" (1.52) in Wilde's play so that he could convince Carr to lend two pounds. In reply to Carr's obsessed questions about the costume, Joyce gives a detailed description of Algernon's costumes in the play – a humorous scene that evidences Carr's self-admiration and vanity:

CARR: How many changes of costume?
 JOYCE: Two complete outfits.
 CARR: Town or country?
 JOYCE: First one then the other.
 CARR: Indoors or out?

JOYCE: Both.

CARR: Summer or winter?

JOYCE: Summer but not too hot.

CARR: Not raining?

JOYCE: Not a cloud in the sky.

[. . .]

CARR (*claps his hands once*): Describe the play briefly, omitting all but essential detail.

JOYCE: The curtain rises. A flat in Mayfair. Teatime. You enter in a bottle-green velvet smoking jacket with black frogging—hose white, cravat perfect, boots elastic-sided, trousers of your own choice.

CARR: I shall have to make certain expenditures.

JOYCE: Act Two. A rose garden. After lunch. Some by-play among the small parts. You enter in a debonair garden party outfit—beribboned boater, gaily striped blazer, parti-colored shoes, trousers of your choice.

CARR (*instantly*): Cream flanel. (1.52)

Getting the first idea from Ellman's biography of Joyce in which Carr is mentioned as an amateur actor who specially bought his own costume from his pocket and had a financial dispute with Joyce over the costume, Stoppard expands on Carr's costume choosing with his ridiculous portrayal of Carr as a man who gives value to outward appearance. Carr is noticed to establish superiority in society by means of his elegant wearing style, although he simply has an inferior position as a minor official.

The conversation between Joyce and Carr contains many humorous statements as it can be observed in the conversation about costuming. The first encounter between Joyce and Carr is also a remarkable scene which arouses humour with Carr's attitude to the Irish writer:

JOYCE: Good morning, my name is James Joyce –

CARR: James Augusta?

JOYCE (*taken aback*): Was that a shot in the dark?

CARR: Not at all – I am a student of footnotes to expatriate Irish literature.

JOYCE: You know my work?

CARR: No – only your name. (1.47)

Also, Carr's perseverance in calling Joyce mistakenly with female names – the Irishman Doris (1.49), Janice (1.51), Phyllis (1.53), Deidre (2.95) – which comes from Joyce's misregistration as James Augusta in reality, adds up to the humour in the play. According to Rod, "the device of misnaming" functions to "suggest that the one whose name cannot be remembered is, to some extent, insignificant, lacking an important or

memorable identity,” a device Stoppard made use of also in the depiction of the inferior courtiers, Ros and Guil, in his earlier play (180).

Actually, though Carr is tolerable to Joyce’s opinions than to the others’, he has a strong personal prejudice towards Joyce. This prejudice can be best observed in his description of Joyce as a subjective narrator:

a complex personality, an enigma, a contradictory spokesman for the truth, an obsessive litigant and yet an essentially private man who wished his total indifference to public notice to be universally recognised – in short, a liar and a hypocrite, a tight-fisted, sponging, forcinating drunk not worth the paper, that’s that bit done. (1.22-23)

The portrayal of Joyce as a caricatured “Irish nonsense” (1.33), from the mouth of an old man who had a quarrel with him in the past, is not something the audience is accustomed to. His eminent career in British literature as an Irish writer and his unique literary works are undermined, although the play presents several minor details of Joyce’s personality. Referring to Joyce’s literary career, Hayman argues as follows: “if anyone came to the play without any knowledge of Joyce, Dada or Lenin, he would learn quite a lot about Dada and Lenin but almost nothing about Joyce” (“Intellectual” 59). However, as Brassell examines, most of the details of Carr’s portrayal of Joyce, such as Joyce’s wearing style, his materialism, or some historical facts like the dispute between Carr and Joyce, Carr’s slandering him, Bennett’s unpleasant attitude in reality, comes from Stoppard’s reading of a neutral source, Ellman’s biography, so as to “belittle or ridicule the artist” (141). Indeed, the influence of his readings is overtly seen in Carr’s recollections where Joyce is represented as a materialistic man who is constantly attempting to borrow money: “A pound would for a start” (1.34), or “I am an Irishman. The proudest boast of an Irishman is – I paid back my way” (1.50), and as a distinguished man who never wears a complete suit but two halves of two different suits: “My wardrobe got out of step in Trieste, and its reciprocal members pass each other endlessly in the night” (2.96). Besides, in Ellman’s biography it is stated that during the dispute between Carr and Joyce, Carr slandered Joyce as “You’re a cad [. . .] You’re a swindler.” (440). Stoppard quotes these words of slander at the very end of the play where Carr, in the world of illusion, calls Joyce “*a swindler and a cad*” (2.96).

Briefly, as an intertextual source, Ellman's biography provides Stoppard with very important historical information about Joyce and Carr, and gives him the opportunity to establish his play on these historical facts. Thus, it is not surprising that the way Joyce is portrayed in Carr's mind reveals both Joyce's characteristics and Carr's mixed feelings of jealousy and prejudice against him. The end of the first act simply illustrates the situation; in his long monologue, Carr intimately tells about his most terrifying dream:

I dreamed about him, dreamed I had him in the witness box, a masterly cross-examination, case practically won, admitted it all, the whole thing, the trousers, everything, and I flung at him – "And what did you do in the Great War?" "I wrote *Ulysses*," he said. "What did you do?"
Bloody nerve. (1.65)

In *Travesties*, making hat tricks is considered the same as creating works of art, especially with regard to the Dadaist poet Tzara. In many scenes he holds a hat which he misuses as a bowl into which he puts the scraps of words while composing his poetry. For instance, in order to woo Gwen, he transforms Shakespeare's eighteenth sonnet "Shall I compare thee a summer's day" into his Dadaist poem. Like a conjuror making hat tricks, Tzara first cuts up the scraps of words from the sonnet and puts them into the hat, then he takes the words out of the hat at random and so composes his new-born poem. And with a conjuror-style, he offers Gwen to take out the words at random and read them aloud:

(*Gwen hesitates but then takes the first slip of paper out of the hat.*)

GWEN: "Darling".

(*She now continues, holding on to all the pieces of paper she takes out.*)

shake thou thy gold buds
the untrimm'd but short fair shade
shines—
see, this lovely hot possession growest
so long
by nature's course—
so . . . long – heaven!

(*She gives a little shriek, using "heaven" and turns her back on the hat, taking a few steps away from Tzara, who takes out the next few words, lowering the temperature . . .*)

TZARA: and declines,
summer changing, more temperate complexion . . . (1.54-55)

This is the way how Tzara proves his love to Gwen. Due to his cut-up technique, a remarkable example of Shakespearean sonnets is travestied in the play. As a result, for Cooke, “order (the written poem) becomes chaos (random scraps of paper)”; yet, although the result is seemingly chaotic, Tzara believes that it has its own design by chance (202). Tzara justifies his weird technique in an epigrammatic way: “All poetry is a reshuffling of a pack of picture cards, and all poets are cheats. I offer you a Shakespeare sonnet, but it is no longer his. It comes from the wellspring where my atoms are uniquely organised, and my signature is written in the hand of chance” (1.53).

Tzara’s style is a kind of pastiche, and his aim of wooing Gwen is fulfilled successfully in the end, despite the fact that Gwen first reacts to the idea of chopping Shakespeare’s romantic sonnet with sadness. Gwen admits her love just like in Wilde’s play: “For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you [. . .]. When Henry told me that he had a friend who edited a magazine of all that is newest and best in literature, I knew I was destined to love you” (1.55).

The flirting between Tzara and Gwen is interrupted by Joyce’s entrance to the room, like Lady Bracknell disrupts the love couple, Jack and Gwendolen, for many times in Wilde’s play. Similarly, like Lady Bracknell inspects Jack Worthing, Joyce inspects Tzara and Dadaism. However, between the flirting scene and the inspection scene, Stoppard makes a notable transition full of farcical elements under Tzara’s influence: his monocle in the wrong eye, Joyce’s confusing his hat with Tzara’s and Joyce’s appearance with bits of papers covering him:

[. . .] JOYCE *re-enters, pausing in the threshold. He is covered from head to breast in little bits of white paper, each bit bearing one of the words of Shakespeare’s eighteenth sonnet, i.e. TZARA was using Joyce’s hat.* [. . .])

JOYCE: What is the meaning of this?

TZARA: It has no meaning. It is without meaning as Nature is. It is Dada. (1.56)

This particular scene exemplifies Shulman’s statement: “if the theme sounds serious, the method of telling is intellectual slapstick” (164). In the above scene, Joyce, still covered with bits of papers, starts to inspect Tzara by asking detailed questions about Dadaism which also helps the audience to reach an assessment about the movement. He

appraises the Dadaist anti-art in a comprehensive way. While doing this, he is picking up papers from his body and putting them into the hat again. He shortly starts to conjure from the hat a white carnation, silk handkerchiefs, flags of some countries, and a rabbit. Although making hat tricks is Tzara's innovation in the play, now, it is Joyce who surprisingly conjures from the hat some tangible objects. Therefore, it would be appropriate to claim that Stoppard portrays Joyce closer to a conjuror than Tzara, as he can produce highly meaningful products. Brassell concludes that the demonstration of magic by Joyce in the play draws attention to "Joyce's conception of the artist as a man magically transmuting the unexceptional into art" (148).

The growing tension in the inspecting scene reaches its climax eventually with Tzara's attack on Joyce's view of art. Tzara advocates that an artist should withstand all the artistic conventions which have been established for centuries by protesting against them, and that the artist should return to the beginnings of his creativity which can be as primitive as the word "dada." He confronts Joyce and his art as he believes that art for art's sake approach can not be valid in the twentieth century:

Your art has failed. You've turned literature into a religion and it's as dead as all the rest, it's an overripe corpse and you're cutting fancy figures at the wake. It's too late for geniuses! Now we need vandals desecrators, simple-minded demolition men to smash centuries of baroque subtlety, to bring down the temple, and thus finally, to reconcile the shame and the necessity of being an artist! Dada! *Dada!* *Dada!!* (1.62)

In reply to Tzara's attack, Joyce calmly asserts: "You are an over-excited little man, with a need for self-expression far beyond the scope of your natural gifts. This is not discreditable. Neither does it make you an artist. An artist is the magician put among men to gratify – capriciously – their urge for immortality" (1.62).

According to many critics, all the different standpoints in the play are treated fairly and given equal weight. However, Stoppard partly agrees on that idea by saying, "Equally *just*, but not equal *weight*" (qtd. in Wetzsteon 82), and he makes it clear that he is "on Joyce's side" in the argument about what an artist is, whereas he is "out of sympathy with Tzara and that kind of art" (qtd. in Kerensky 86). For this reason, Stoppard

deliberately gives the last word to Joyce in the argument at the end of the first act quoted above as he wants Joyce “to murder Tzara” (qtd. in Wetzsteon 83).

The Dadaist movement demands for the destruction of all traditional forms in society by bringing radical changes. Withstanding the bourgeois moralities and traditions, Tzara and his Dadaist fellows cling to their revolutionary ideas, primarily on aesthetics and other issues of politics and society. In the play, Tzara states: “I am the natural enemy of bourgeois art and the natural ally of the political left” (1.45). Although Dadaism and communism have different incentives, the common characteristics of these ideologies is the concept of revolution against all established forms. For revolution, “both Dadaism and communism create their own genre: the manifesto” (Orlich 376), which can be overtly observed in many parts of Tzara’s and Lenin’s speeches in the play, in terms of their radical proclamations on aesthetics and politics. According to Orlich, Stoppard, “as a refined observer,” has the opinion that “Dadaism’s political aesthetics is closely related to the program of Leninist ideology formulated in opposition with the bourgeois establishment and aiming at a certain social end” (375). Within this framework, in the play, the relation between the two ideologies is presented to the reader/audience with Carr’s recollection that both revolutions were born on the same street in Zurich:

Truth of the matter, who’d have thought big oaks from the corner room at number 14 *Spiegelgasse*? – now here is a thing: two revolutions formed in the same street. Face to face in *Spiegelgasse*! *Street of Revolution*! *A Sketch*. . . .*Spiegelgasse*! – narrow, cobbled, high old houses in a solid rank, number 14 the house of the narrow cobbler himself, Kammerer his name, Lenin his tenant – and across the way at Number One, the *Meierei Bar*, crucible of anti-art, cradle of Dada!!! (1.24)

Carr’s descriptive narration determines that both Lenin and Tzara as expatriate intellectuals who establish their manifestoes coincidentally on the same street, *Spiegelgasse*. On the same issue, Pearce writes:

The name of the street comments on the two historical figures’ thematic and structural relationship in the play. They mirror one another as revolutionaries, but they differ in that one is transforming the world, the other art. This fundamental structure of sameness and difference is essential to the design of the play. It is an imaginative form, not simply conceptual or analytical. It functions as metaphor, and is a metaphorical principle underlying particular images. (1139)

The two revolutionary figures' mirroring each other on the same street enriches the mirror image in the play. For Pearce, "the mirror image posits sameness and difference" (1139). Lenin and Tzara reflect one another with both sameness and difference. Generally speaking, the whole play is based on the characters' mirroring one another, and views' mirroring views with sameness and difference. In addition to these sub-mirrorings, the major mirroring in Stoppard's playworld is art's reflecting reality. This refers to the mimetic theory of art which requires an imitation, and in the case of Stoppard's play, travesty becomes a particular kind of imitation. However, travesty implies "doing some violence to the object imitated" (Pearce 1152). In other words, in Stoppard's play, the reflection of reality is distorted by Carr's erratic mind, which represents a blurred mirror that reflects the reality with a number of travesties. Therefore, through a number of travesties, the reality is metamorphosed into something exceptionally different in Carr's mind; that is, history, characters, events, literature, art, revolution, Marxism, and Dadaism, briefly, all the elements in the play are distorted.

The confrontations between Carr, Tzara, Joyce and Gwen on the issue of art and its function are suspended for a time when the curtain rises with Cecily's informative lecture on Marx and Lenin at the beginning of the second act. Indeed, this scene corresponds to the opening lecture scene of Cecily and her tutor Miss Prism in the second act of Wilde's play. Cecily's lecture employs a rather serious tone in comparison to the whole play. She realistically talks about political history and the socialist leader Lenin. Her seriousness contrasts with the humorous interactions between the characters seen in the first act. The audience is subjected to a serious lecture which immediately changes the mood of the play. As stated in the stage directions, Cecily, at her library desk, waits for the audience to take their seats after the interval, and like a teacher, she addresses her lecture to the audience. With this scene the distance between the stage and the audience no longer exists due to her didactic aside as a result of which the play comes close to a Brechtian play. Cecily's translating each speech of Nadya and Lenin from Russian into English for the audience adds to the alienation effect created in the play.

Also the love affairs are under the intellectual influence of the debates on art and revolution. In the second act, Carr arrives at the library to see Cecily with Tzara's identity card. He, in disguise, argues with Cecily about the function of art as social criticism. Like a twin-sister of Lenin, or like a female reflection of Lenin in the mirror, Cecily supports the appropriation of art for non-aesthetic purposes and says: "the sole duty and justification for art is social criticism" (2.74). She is against both Joyce's conventional art for purely aesthetic purpose and Tzara's redefinition of art as an important activity in the mirror of Dadaism. By contrast, according to Carr, "art doesn't change society, it is merely changed by it" (2.74). He thinks that art has no function as social criticism since it simply brings about entertainment just like the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan of the Victorian age. Taking into consideration the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, Carr acknowledges that art "gratifies a hunger that is common to princes and peasants" (2.74). The continuing debates between the love couples serve Stoppard's aim to boost the number of confrontations. In his argument with Cecily, Carr comes face to face with Lenin's ideological expression of art like propaganda. Similarly, Tzara's argument with Gwen can be regarded as an argument between Tzara and Joyce.

In his recollections, Carr also remembers himself as an agent, spying for the benefits of his country during the war. As the British Consul, Carr disguises himself in the library so as to spy on Lenin. Thanks to Cecily, Lenin's secretary, he learns that Lenin is going to leave the country by the help of Tzara who gets the Consul's correspondence from Carr's manservant Bennett. So, in the spying game Carr is betrayed by his servant who throughout the play brings him information about the news in Zurich. The master and servant relationship between Algernon and Lane in Wilde's comedy of manners is changed into the hypocritical interaction between Carr and Bennett. At the end of the play, a historical fact is revealed, that is, Bennett is the real Consul in 1917, which amounts to saying that Carr has ironically subordinated him to the role of his servant in his foggy mind. In the library scene, Carr's having a servant becomes a problem in his love affair with Cecily. Cecily, as a socialist, is against the idea of having a servant whereas Carr, as the Consul, sees nothing about it:

CECILY: I am afraid that I disapprove of servants.

CARR: You are quite right to do so. Most of them are without scruples.

CECILY: In the socialist future, no one will have any.

CARR: So I believe. (2.73)

The opposition between two different views is clearly seen in their conversation above. They misunderstand each other's speeches: while Carr means servants' "scruples," Cecily means "servants." This kind of punning on words – misunderstandings in the language – indicate their differences successfully (Zeifman "Tomfoolery" 103).

The confrontations in the play sometimes become harsher. The conversation between Cecily and Carr starts to display verbal attacks on one another, as the argument becomes gradually heated. These climactic moments generally end up with time slips which enable the characters to initiate their conversation again in the regular line by decreasing the tension. Or, at times, with the growing tension, the characters swear at each other. For instance, Cecily, getting angry with Carr, starts to swear: "That's because I'm about to puke into your nancy straw hat, you *prig!* – you swanking canting fop, you bourgeois intellectual humbugger, you—*artist!* [. . .] you patronising Kant-struck prig, all the time you're talking about the classes you're trying to imagine how I'd looked stripped off my knickers –" (2.77-78).

However, this time the tension in Cecily's argument, instead of another time slip, ends up with a familiar Stoppardian theatricality, to be more specific, with a striptease scene.

([. . .] As CECILY continues to speak we get a partial Carr's-mind view of her. Coloured lights begin to play over her body, and most of the other light goes except for a bright spot on Carr. Faintly from 1974, comes the sound of the big band playing "The Stripper". CARR is in a trance. The music builds. CECILY might perhaps climb on to her desk. The desk may have "cabaret lights" built into it for use at this point.). (2.78)

Through Carr's irrelevant imagination, Cecily starts to strip her clothes while she is arguing about Marxism and other "-isms." With Cecily's striptease scene, the paradox between the visual and the audio not only perplexes the audience but also makes a serious matter like Marxism ridiculous. After the cabaret-like interruption in the flow of the play, their conversation quickly turns back to the flirting of the love couples according to the plot of Wilde's play. Carr admits his love: "I have come to tell you that

you seem to me be the visible personification of absolute perfection” (2.78), and Cecily admits: “Ever since Jack told me he had a younger brother who was a decadent nihilist it has been my girlish dream to reform you and to love you” (2.79). And this time the flirting is disrupted with Nadya’s entrance. As seen from the quotations given above, Stoppard changes the Wildean love affairs in his own play which is conveyed through foggy memories of an old narrator.

As for the character of Lenin, the way he is portrayed is quite different from that of the other historical figures for many reasons. In the first place, Stoppard does not set Lenin within his play according to the parallel structure of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Unlike Carr, Tzara and Joyce who have parallelism with the characters of Algernon, Jack and Lady Bracknell respectively in Wilde’s play, Lenin does not have a parallel character, and his interaction with the others is accomplished mainly by his wife Nadya and his secretary Cecily. Throughout the play, Lenin never directly confronts Carr, Joyce or Tzara; instead, in his long monologues addressing to the audience, he severely confronts all the distinct views represented by these three.

Together with his wife, Lenin appears only in the library – never in Carr’s room – in the opening of the play and in the second act. In compliance with the bizarre activity and the incomprehensibility of the dialogues in the opening scene, Lenin and Nadya are seen doing nonsensical things while speaking with each other in Russian. As soon as they receive the news that the revolution has broken out in Russia, they leave the stage, and they are not seen until the second act. In the second act, while they are preparing for their departure from Switzerland, comprehensive information about communism and the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 is conveyed through them.

Furthermore, Stoppard specifically dwells upon Lenin and his wife Nadya and presents intertextual references from Lenin’s own writings about art. The quantity of historical materials on Lenin and the successive presentation of these materials in the second act gives way to a less caricaturised Lenin speaking out his statements much closer to reality. However, this section of the play is discussed adversely by many critics. As an example, Dean argues: “Critically, the second act was poorly received and became

something of a scapegoat for the play's shortcomings (its lengthy set speeches, its inclusion of Lenin and Nadya, and its digressiveness)" (78). While according to Bigsby, "Lenin remains stolidly detached" (26) within the whole play, Irving Wardle comments on the "complete failure" of the plot structure "to absorb Lenin" and claims: "one has the feeling that the main play has come to a stop" (qtd. in Bareham 165). For Dean, actually, Stoppard would have had little difficulty in portraying Lenin as ridiculous as Tzara and Joyce, but he preferred to portray Lenin more realistically than the others without making travesty of him; in place of making a travesty of him, he made a travesty of his contradictory statements on art (79). Dean continues his argument by illustrating two reasons for the failure of Lenin's aesthetic theories: one, "they are self-contradictory", and two, "they are contradicted by his own visceral response to art" (79).

First of all, Lenin's aesthetic theories are self-contradictory as he supposes not only that in a communist state an artist should be independent, but also that art should be tolerated on condition that it responds the benefits of the communist regime. However, he is a utilitarian in aesthetics, and for him, the primary function of art is to support Marxist ideas. Similarly, he has paradoxical views on press as he favors both restriction and freedom in press. In one of Lenin's speeches addressed to the audience, his views on press are manifest:

We want to establish and we shall establish a free press, free not simply from the police, but also from capital, from careerism, and what is more, *free from bourgeois anarchist individualism!* These last words may seem paradoxical or an affront to my audience. Calm yourselves, ladies and gentlemen! Everyone is free to write and say whatever he likes, without any restrictions. But every voluntary association, including the party, is also free to expel members who use the name of the party to advocate anti-party views. (2.85)

In the second act, Tom Stoppard makes use of historical references from some of Lenin's letters to the party officials and from Nadya's memoirs of Lenin's own commentaries on plays, concerts and novels. For instance, in one of his recollections, it becomes obvious that Lenin previously used to prefer reading Pushkin to Mayakovski, and only after he learned that Pushkin was a bourgeois, he changed his choice (Dean 80). Subsequently, he confesses that he is attracted to Beethoven's "Appassionata"

although he does not like the state of being enticed by art. For him, one must abstain from the enticement of art, as he thinks under the miraculous influence of art, which invokes humanity and beauty, one can do nonsensical things:

I don't know of anything greater than the Appassionata. Amazing, superhuman music. It always makes me feel, perhaps naively, it makes me feel proud of the miracles that human beings can perform. But I can't listen to music often. It affects my nerves, makes me want to say nice stupid things and pat the heads of those people who while living in this vile hell can create such beauty. Nowadays we can't pat heads or we'll get our hands bitten off. We've got to *hit* heads, hit them without mercy, though ideally we're against doing violence to people . . . Hm, one's duty is infernally hard. (2.89)

This statement can be regarded as the evidence of the self-contradiction in Lenin's understanding of aesthetics on which Stoppard intends to focus throughout the second act. As Dean puts it, "Marx said that religion is the opiate of the people; Lenin seems to realize that art is dangerous for similar reasons" (80).

In opposition to Lenin's utilitarianism in aesthetics, James Joyce stands for the belief in art for art's sake in the play. In the second act, his belief in art for art's sake is confronted by Lenin's art for politics sake approach. Joyce is confronted by Lenin's art for social criticism as he supports his idea with Homer's *Iliad*. Joyce claims that if Homer had not narrated the Trojan War in his classic masterpiece *Iliad*, most probably, this historical war would not have been widely known by the public and might have taken place solely within the pages of history books as an ordinary war. In Lenin and Joyce opposition, it is clear that both of them are stick to their ideas. Although they represent two different poles, they have common points in the play: both of them carry out their studies by the help of their secretaries and compose their studies within the folders. The accidental exchange of folders in the Zurich library at the beginning of the play is significant in the sense that it enables them to flourish their ideas by means of benefiting from each other. In relation to this, Orlich makes the clear point that Joyce might be inspired by Lenin after he examines Lenin's folder:

To Joyce's fascination with the figure of Ulysses, whom he famously transposed into a contemporary setting in Dublin, Lenin provided an extraordinary case of travesty. He was a modern day Ulysses, in a state of everlasting return to Russia (Ithaca), permanently ready to examine the problems hanging about the powerful

object of his desire, the class struggle. In power for only a short time, Lenin kept mostly wandering toward the home through a troubled exile and armed with a grand ideology in which art, the result of radically collectivized labor, functions as a perfect organization of the class struggle (377).

Travesties is full of confrontations about art and revolution. In one of his interviews, Stoppard justifies his dramatic writing with the below words:

I write plays because writing dialogue is the only respectable way of contradicting yourself [. . .]. I'm the kind of person who embarks on an endless leapfrog down the great moral issues. I put a position, rebut it, refute it, refute the rebuttal, and rebut the refutation. Forever. Endlessly. (qtd. in Gussow "Stoppard" 31)

Stoppard's plays evidence the self-confrontations in his mind with endless dialogues at their hearts. *Travesties* is also made up of this kind of an endless leapfrogging on serious issues. In an interview, he makes it clear that the play is "an ongoing debate with [himself] over the importance of the artist" (qtd. in Wetzsteon 82). In another interview, he also admits: "Plays are the people who write them [. . .]. My plays are a lot to do with the fact that *I just don't know*" (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 65). Throughout the play Stoppard puts forward four different standpoints confronting each other and offering no tangible resolution. In *Travesties*, he never puts his own ideas in the foremost position although his own ideas about art and revolution can be clearly discerned within the speeches of some of his characters. In reality, "committed art," Stoppard thinks, "is really a kind of bogus enterprise" (qtd. in Watts 50) an idea also advocated by Joyce in the play. Furthermore, very similar to his fictitious character Carr who believes that art is not important, Stoppard states:

I've always felt that the artist is the lucky man. I get deeply embarrassed by the statements and postures of "committed" theatre. There is no such thing as "pure" art – art is a commentary on something else in life – it might be adultery in the suburbs, or the Vietnamese war. I think that art ought to involve itself in contemporary social and political history as much as anything else, but I find it deeply embarrassing when large claims are made for such an involvement: when, because art takes notice of something important, it's claimed that the art is important. It's not [. . .]. When Auden said his poetry didn't save one Jew from the gas chamber, he'd said it all [. . .] I've never felt art is important. That's been my secret guilt. I think it's the secret guilt of most artists. (qtd. in Watts 50)

As another matter of fact, Stoppard's most prominent inspiration, Oscar Wilde, has a similar proclamation on art. In the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), Wilde says: "All art is quite useless" (qtd. in Abrams *Norton* 2:1628). However, it should be noticed that Stoppard also confronts his own statement on the insignificance of art by making the following point: "art [. . .] is important because it provides the moral matrix, the moral sensibility, from which we make our judgments about the world" (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 66).

Similarly, Stoppard's views about the Bolshevik Revolution and the totalitarianism of the communist regime have an influence over his depiction of Lenin. In the play, Lenin is less travestied and depicted more realistically than the other historical figures. For Brassell, Stoppard is reluctant to "make Lenin's political dogmatism comic" (157) as he believes that Leninism or any kind of totalitarianism had adverse consequences in history. Stoppard contends:

The repression which for better or worse turned out to be Leninism in action after 1917 was very much worse than anything which had gone on in Tsarist Russia. I mean, in purely mundane boring statistical terms, which sometimes can contain the essence of a situation, it is simply true that in the ten years after 1917 fifty times more people were done to death than in the *fifty* years before 1917. (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 64)

Therefore, in the second act of the play, Stoppard also intends to bring forward the failure of Marxism. He tries to depict the character of Lenin as realistic as his historical self in order to present the contradictory nature of Lenin's political arguments. Through Lenin's historical statements full of contradictions, Stoppard aims at ridiculing totalitarianism and its consequences such as the repression of the press and the imposition of non-artistic art for the benefits of the community.

Consequently, Tom Stoppard playfully handles art, revolution, Dadaism and their representatives in *Travesties*, namely Joyce, Lenin, and Tzara, through humorous wordplays, limericks, and intertextual references. On the one hand, concerned with serious matters, Stoppard adds an intellectual quality to his play; on the other, focused predominantly on style, he enriches the theatricality of his play. To trivialise the seriousness, he resorts to various techniques, the most remarkable ones of which are the

travesty technique in characterisation, the alienation effect in dialogue and action, the intertextual references and the play-within-the-play in the plot structure, and the inconsistent narration of the whole play from the mouth of an old storyteller. For Cave, Stoppard employs “an art of travesty, where much of the humour depends for its effect on the audience familiarity with the plot, conventions or style of a well-known play or popular theatrical format” (62-63). To put it differently, the metadramatic effect of the play mounts on humour. The play also abounds in double meanings, punnings, ironies, paradoxes and epigrams within the constant debates on art and revolution. However, these debates conclude nothing. Many questions are discussed, yet no conclusion is reached in the end. According to Whitaker, the play “asks us to refract both the content and the style of our playing through an ironic prism that illuminates several large questions: How do we make art? Or revolution? Or history? Or, indeed, any kind of meaning?” (194). Here, the point to be emphasised is that all the major questions introduced within the debates have open-ended answers as a result of relativity. The relativity and the inconsistency in the play are best observed in Old Carr’s narration. His final speech evidences what has been analysed and discussed so far:

CARR: Great days . . . Zurich during the war. Refugees, spies, exiles, painters, poets, writers, radicals of all kinds. I knew them all. Used to argue far into the night . . . at the Odeon, the Terrasse . . . I learned three things in Zurich during the war. I wrote them down. Firstly, you’re either a revolutionary or you’re not, and if you’re not you might as well be an artist as anything else. Secondly if you can’t be an artist, you might as well be a revolutionary . . .

I forget the third thing.

(BLACKOUT.) (2.99)

CONCLUSION

In contemporary British drama, there is no other dramatist like Tom Stoppard who unites the play of ideas with farce in the shadow of his persistent theatricality (Brassell 268). His plays are a combination of a great number of independent issues with various kinds of theatrical devices. Most remarkably, he enriches the content of his plays with the help of allusiveness, playfully handles intellectual issues and catches a glimpse of humour in each serious matter.

The themes Stoppard dealt with in his plays are common in much of contemporary literature since he dwells on “the anxiety and confusion of life,” “the helplessness of the individual” caught up in eternal forces, “the loss of identity,” as well as “the lack of absolute values, the problem of freedom, the uncertainty of all knowledge and perception” (Robinson 37). However, it would be unsatisfactory to underline these serious themes alone. It is manifest that most of his plays contain these serious subjects; nonetheless, the writer’s treatment of them is not solemn but lighthearted. The plays suggest farce and humour together with seriousness through the display of a series of bizarre incidents, comic confusions, misunderstandings, misperceptions and mistaken identities. The ambiguity in his plays is not resolved although a logical explanation to the bizarre happenings is usually suggested. The dualisms between appearance and reality, sense and logic, chaos and order are dominantly presented for intellectual discussion which makes Robinson describe Stoppard’s theatre as follows: “He initiates us into a world in which the commonplace is seen as absurd and absurdity accepted as commonplace. Disorder is the order of the day, which is reflected in the incoherence, the lack of ‘sustained action’ of his plays” (48).

Stoppard’s plays bring forward contradictions and debates through complicated plots as well as through the relationships between the characters. His characters are left alone in a confusing world try to find a logical and rational explanation to the absurd conditions surrounding them. Ironically, Stoppard does not let them manage to achieve this, while he exhibits several clues and foreshadowings for the audience to perceive the logic behind the bizarreness. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Ros and Guil’s

blindness against all the implications of their impending fate is one of the playwright's deliberate depictions of this state of affairs. The characters' fate is defined by another text/play, and the only logical explanation Stoppard offers the reader is their entrapment within a play which has its own direction and destination.

In their predicament, Stoppard's characters also have to overcome a sense of inferiority. Ros and Guil's efforts to surpass their capacity of understanding in an overwhelming universe fails each time their question-answer games or role-playings are broken up by the intrusions of the characters from the controlling script, *Hamlet*, and their failure brings about more confusion and sense of inferiority. Similarly, the sense of inferiority plays a dominant role in *Travesties*. Despite the fact that all of them are travesties, the characters feel superior to one another and persist in their own views trying to rebut others' views. Apparently, their egocentric monologues and dialogues demonstrate their intention to be superior to others. Although their crashing words seem to create confusion at first sight, each of these words contains a logic and meaning. The play, Cooke states, is an example of "Stoppard's theatre of chaos" with "snatches of songs, dialogue in limericks, patches of Shakespeare and Joyce, laborious reenactments of Lenin's speeches, crackbrained soliloquies from a senile old man, Zurich during the World War I," and with "a simulacrum of *The Importance of Being Earnest*"; however, Cooke also makes it clear that confusion "is not the theme but rather a raw material from which the story draws its energy" (199-200).

One of Stoppard's characters, namely Lord Malquist in *Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon* states: "I look around me and I recoil from such disorder. We live amidst absurdity, so close to it that it escapes our notice. . . . Since we cannot hope for order let us withdraw with style from the chaos" (16). The idea of withdrawal with style from the chaos is one of the most dominant features of Stoppard's drama. Chaos is what enables Stoppard to explore the confusion in his characters' lives and reflect their ludicrous situations through parody or travesty. In Stoppard's plays, the characters' bafflement in a chaotic world is neutralised through farcical action and a humorous language. Most of the time, farcical elements, exaggerations, improbable or ludicrous situations, and echoing or parallel statements come to the foreground to provoke the audience to laugh at the

performance on stage. At times, his characters come close to clownish or caricaturised types whose physical actions include slapsticks and gags. Ros and Guil's exchanging of coins in the coin-tossing game, their synchronised bowings of the royal family, Ros' falling trousers and his pinching of Guil's leg as if it is his own leg can be regarded as the farcical elements in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. In *Travesties*, farce becomes an even more prevalent part of the action since from the beginning to the end, the play consists of several comic situations: the characters' bizarre deeds – their exaggerations, insultings and echoing statements – their being exaggerated and travesties of real or fictional figures, the travestied limericks, and poems all arouse laughter in the theatre.

In addition to these farcical elements on the road of entertainment, Stoppard enriches the humour in his plays with his use of witty dialogues, sophisticated puns as well as cliché statements and distorted quotations. His language is full of puns based on the relation between the suggested meaning and the perceived meaning of a word. Like Magritte's paintings that illustrate the interaction between the sign or the object and the signified meaning, Stoppard's plays exemplify the interaction between the real and the perceived or perception. In his plays, a single word may transform into several perceived meanings. His puns convey more than one meaning, enhancing the diversity and intellectual quality of the plays. As a result, an ambiguous language comes to the fore and defeats the monopolisation of a single word, meaning or idea. As Zeifman suggests,

Stoppard's puns are not only to amuse. Amuse they certainly do, and amuse they were intended to do, but they have other functions as well. Stoppard uses puns, carefully and deliberately, as structural devices in his plays, as an integral part of a play's basic 'meaning'. Just as from invariably mirrors content in Stoppard's drama (indeed, form frequently *becomes* content), so too do patterns of language, and particularly puns. ("Tomfoolery" 86)

Within this framework, in both plays, the characters challenge each other by means of their wit and punnings in their endless debates. While opposing others' views, "delectate" becomes "defecate" for Tzara (1.48); while philosophising about the behaviours of the royal family, "retentive" becomes "elephantine" for Guil (1.29). Guil

states: “Word, words. They’re all we have to go on.” (1.30), and in accordance with these words, in both plays, the action is defined by some other text, and between the defined actions what all the characters can do is to talk and express their ideas to end up in a better situation. At times, they also express their ideas through cliché words or distorted quotations from other works of literature.

Stoppard claims: “my plays may have a fragmented look, but they’re very traditional plays. Everything is logical and rational. I have no interest in anarchic or unstructured art. [. . .] I believe in craftsmanship. It’s what crystallizes an art form” (qtd. in Eichelbaum 105). As a matter of fact, in constructing his plays, Stoppard, as he himself expresses, has “enormous difficulty in working out plots” (qtd. in Hudson, Itzin, and Trussler 60). That is why he borrows plots from other works of literature and fills his plays with episodic sections like the cliché scenes of whodunnit stories, inner plays, dumbshows, a series of fascinating illusions, time-shiftings, and quoted historical speeches. The series of fragmented parts ambushes the audience by overturning their thoughts about the illusiveness of the play and by surpassing their expectations.

Stoppard’s distinguished craftsmanship lies in his belief in theatricality. He says: “I’m quite hot on the theatricality of theatre. That’s not really the tautology it sounds [. . .]. For me, theatre is not literature. It’s an event” (qtd. in Bragg 118). Throughout his painstakingly written plays, he establishes his own kind of drama which esteems the performance. Virtually, all of his plays, evidencing his great fondness of theatricality, abound in fascinating illusions of game playing, role playing, time-shiftings, parodies, travesties, bizarre openings – such as a pyramid of jumpers, or a huge mirror reflecting the auditorium – whodunnit mysteries, inner plays, all of which serve to ambush the audience. It becomes manifest that the high theatricality of his plays strengthens the illusiveness, or the audience’s awareness of the event’s unreality.

Most of Stoppard’s plays are metadramas containing inner plays, revolving around the theatrical metaphor of “all the world is a stage” with a particular emphasis on the illusiveness of the stage events. Both *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties* employ metadramatic elements which break up the illusion and call the

audience's attention to the reality. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is a metadrama emphasising the art of acting with its particular presentation of a group of players and the play-within-the-play device. The presence of a group of players and their acting a performance in an inner play serve to remind the audience that they are witnessing an artificial world, not a real one. Most apparently, the play is the story of two allusive characters from Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*, which is well-known all around the world. Similarly, in *Travesties*, the performance of another famous play, Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, is at the core of the plot structure proceeding in line with the narration of a story teller. Directly addressed to the audience, the narration, as an alienation effect, brings to mind the illusionary nature of the play.

The point about Tom Stoppard's creations is that the writer exalts form by trivialising the content through his humorous witty style. Although his plays embody different intellectual statements, the common characteristic feature in these works is Stoppard's esteem for style. The everlasting sophisticated discussions on various issues – the function of art, the political and social incentives of revolutions, the metaphysical and philosophical questions on determinism, man's capability, or more correctly put, his incapability, the inscrutability of fate, the relativity of truth and history – that is to say, almost all the complex issues are suspended in his plays due to the detachment established through the humorous language and witty style, since the writer's major intention is not to find an answer to these enigmatic questions, but to demonstrate man's ridiculous condition during his search for truth. However, ironically, Stoppard's characters are not aware of the fact that truth is a changeable phenomenon, and their discussions in pursuit of truth bring about more confusion with contrasts and contradictions in their lives. Actually, these discussions are the products of a playwright "who enjoys arguing with himself and crystallising the contradictions into characters" (Hayman "Intellectual" 53) which inevitably makes one think: "his Rosencrantz and Guildenstern add up to himself in the sense that they're carrying out his private dialogue. The mainspring of *Travesties* is the debate about art which has been going on inside his brain for years" (Hayman "Intellectual" 53).

However, it is apparent that differently from his ridiculous characters, Stoppard creates his own truth, a truth created by means of a humorous witty style. "[. . .] Truth is

entirely and absolutely a matter of style” (“Decay” 227) for Oscar Wilde, and obviously Stoppard follows his predecessor’s pronouncement and playfully treats the intellectual content of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* and *Travesties* to create his own “truth” which is, most probably, ambiguity.

APPENDIX A: A LIST OF TOM STOPPARD'S WORKS

A.1. WORKS FOR THE STAGE

The Gamblers (1965)¹
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Meet King Lear (1964)
Tango (1966; an adaptation of Slawomir Mrozek's play)
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (1966)
Enter a Free Man (1968)
The Real Inspector Hound (1968)
After Magritte (1970)
Dogg's Our Pet (1971)
Jumpers (1972)
The House of Bernarda Alba (1973; an adaptation of Federico Garcia Lorca's play)
Travesties (1974)
Dirty Linen, New-Found-Land (1976)
The 15-Minute Dogg's Troupe Hamlet (1976)
Every Good Boy Deserves Favour (1977)
Professional Foul (1977)
Night and Day (1978)
Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth (1979)
Undiscovered Country (1979; an adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's *Das Weite Land*)
On the Razzle (1981; an adaptation of Johann Nestroy's *Einen Jux will er machen*)
The Real Thing (1982)
The Love of Three Oranges (1983; an English libretto of Sergei Prokofiev's opera)
Rough Crossing (1984; an adaptation of Ferenc Molnar's *Play at the Castle*)
Dalliance (1986; an adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's *Liebelei*)
Largo Desolato (1986; a translation of Vaclav Havel's play)
Hapgood (1988)
Arcadia (1993)
The Merry Widow (1993; an English narration of Franz Lehar's opera)
Indian Ink (1995)
The Invention of Love (1997)
The Seagull (1997; an adaptation of Anton Chekhov's play)
The Coast of Utopia (2002)
Pirandello's Henry IV (2004; a translation of Luigi Pirandello's play)
Heroes (2005; a translation of Gerald Sibleyras's *The Wind in the Poplars*)
Rock' n' Roll (2006)

¹ Unless otherwise stated, the plays are listed in chronological order of composition.

A.2. WORKS FOR THE RADIO

A Walk on the Water (1963)
Dissolution of Dominic Boot (1964)
'M' is for Moon and Other Thing (1964)
A Paragraph for Mr. Blake (1965)
If You're Glad, I'll be Frank (1966)
A Student's Diary (1966)
A Separate Peace (1966)
Teeth (1967)
Another Moon Called Earth (1967)
Albert's Bridge (1967)
Where are They Now ? (1970)
Artist Descending a Staircase (1972)
The Dog It Was That Died (1982)
In the Native State (1991)

A.3. WORKS FOR THE SCREEN

Neutral Ground (1968)
The Engagement (1970)
Three Men in a Boat (1975; a television adaptation of Jerome K. Jerome's novel)
The Romantic Englishwoman (1975)
The Boundary (1975; in collaboration with Clive Exton)
Professional Foul (1977)
Despair (1978)
The Human Factor (1980; a television adaptation of Graham Greene's novel)
Squaring the Circle (1984)
Brazil (1985; in collaboration with Terry Gilliam and Charles McKeon)
Empire of the Sun (1987)
The Russia House (1990)
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead (1990)
Billy Bathgate (1991)
Poodle Springs (1998)
Shakespeare in Love (1998; in collaboration with Marc Norman)
Vatel (2000)
Enigma (2001)
The Bourne Ultimatum (2007; in collaboration with Tony Gilroy, Scott Z. Burns and George Nolfi)

A.4. NON-FICTION

Introduction 2: Stories by New Writers (1964)

Lord Malquist and Mr Moon (1966)²

² The sources used in preparation of this list are:

“Stoppard: A Chronology.” 28 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.sondheimguide.com/Stoppard/chronology.html>>.

“Tom Stoppard.” 28 Aug. 2007 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Stoppard.html>.

WORKS CITED

1. PRIMARY SOURCES:

Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. New York: Grove, 1967.

- - - . *Travesties*. London: Faber, 1975.

2. SECONDARY SOURCES:

Abrams, M.H., ed. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 7th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1993.

- - -, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Vol. 2. London: Norton, 1993.

Aesherson, Neal. "Revolution in the Head." *The Observer*. 4 June 2006. 20 Nov. 2006
<<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,,1789807,00.html>>.

Babula, William. "The Play-Life Metaphor in Shakespeare and Stoppard." *Modern Drama* 15 (Dec. 1972): 279-81.

Bareham, T., ed. *Tom Stoppard: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, Jumpers, Travesties*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990.

Bassanese, Fiora A. *Understanding Luigi Pirandello*. Columbia, S.C.: U of South Carolina P, 1997.

Benjamin, Walter. *Understanding Brecht*. London: Verso, 1983.

Bennett, Jonathan. "Philosophy and Mr. Stoppard." Jenkins, *Critical Essays on Tom Stoppard* 73-87.

- Bentley, Eric. "The Importance of Being Earnest." *Oscar Wilde: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Richard Ellman. New Jersey: Prentice, 1969.111.
- Berlin, Norman. "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: Theater of Criticism." Jenkins, *Critical Essays on Tom Stoppard* 43-50.
- Berry, Michael. "Arcadia." 24 Aug. 1996. 25 Sept. 2005 <www.sff.net/people/mberry/arcadia.htm>.
- Bigsby, C. W. E. *Tom Stoppard*. Harlow: Longman, 1979.
- Billington, Michael. "Rock'N'Roll." *Guardian Unlimited*. 15 June 2006. 20 Nov. 2006 <<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,329505348-110430,00.html>>.
- - -. *Stoppard the Playwright*. London: Methuen, 1987.
- Bloom, Harold, ed. *Modern Critical Views: George Bernard Shaw*. New York: Chelsea, 1987.
- Boireau, Nicole, ed. *Drama on Drama: Dimensions of Theatricality on the Contemporary British Stage*. "Tom Stoppard's Metadrama: The Haunting Repetition." New York: St. Martin's, 1997.
- Bradshaw, Jon. "Tom Stoppard, Nonstop: Word Games with a Hit Playwright." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 89-99.
- Bragg, Melvyn. "The South Bank Show." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 115-24.
- Brassell, Tim. *Tom Stoppard: An Assessment*. London: Macmillan, 1985.

- Brater, Enoch. "Parody, Travesty, and Politics in the Plays of Tom Stoppard." *Essays on Contemporary British Drama*. Eds. Hedwig Bock and Albert Wertheim. Munchen: Hueber, 1981. 117-30.
- Brooker, Peter. "Key Words in Brecht's Theory and Practice." *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. Eds. Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks. New York: Cambridge UP, 1994.
- Brustein, Robert. "Something Disturbingly Vogueish and Available." *Bareham* 93-95.
- Bryden, Ronald. Rev. of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. *Bareham* 69.
- Cave, Richard Allen. "New Forms of Comedy: Ayckbourn and Stoppard." *New British Drama In Performance On The London Stage: 1970-1985*. New York: St. Martin's, 1988. 70-100.
- Cohn, Ruby. "Tom Stoppard: Light Drama and Dirges in Marriage." *Contemporary English Drama*. Ed. C.W.E. Bigsby. New York: Holmes, 1981. 109-20.
- Cooke, John William. "The Optical Allusion: Perception and Form in Stoppard's *Travesties*." *Contemporary British Drama, 1970-90: Essays From Modern Drama*. Eds. Hersch Zeifman and Cynthia Zimmerman. London: Macmillan, 1993. 199-216.
- Dean, Joan Fitzpatrick. *Tom Stoppard: Comedy as a Moral Matrix*. St. Louis: U of Missouri P, 1981.
- Delaney, Paul, ed. *Tom Stoppard in Conversation*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994.
- - -. *Tom Stoppard: The Moral Vision of the Major Plays*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990.

- Dietrich, Richard F. *British Drama 1890 to 1950: A Critical History*. Boston: Twayne, 1989.
- Dodd, John. "Success is the Only Unusual Thing about Mr. Stoppard." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 12-14.
- Dukore, Bernard F. *Bernard Shaw, Playwright: Aspects of Shavian Drama*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1973.
- Duncan, Joseph F. "Stoppard and Beckett." Bareham 76-84.
- Eichelbaum, Stanley. "Call Me the Thinking Man's Farceur." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 77-79.
- Edwards, Mark. "Czechs and Thugs and Rock'n'Roll". *Sunday Times*. 11 June 2006. 20 Nov. 2006 <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/article672469.ece>.
- Egan, Robert. "The Importance of the Player and His Troupe." Bareham 96-106.
- Eliot, T.S. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Eds. M. H. Abrams, et al. Vol.2. London: Norton, 1993. 2140-43.
- - -. "The Metaphysical Poets." *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. London: Faber, 1975. 59-67.
- Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982.
- Gabbard, Lucina Paquet. *The Stoppard Plays*. New York: Whitston, 1982.
- Gold, Margaret. "A New Chapter in the History of the Comedy of Ideas." Bareham 184-89.

Gordon, Giles. "Tom Stoppard." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 15-23.

Goreou, Angeline. "Is *The Real Inspector Hound* a Shaggy Dog Story?" Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 256-60.

Gruber, William E. "A Version of Justice." Bareham 17.

Guppy, Shusha. "Tom Stoppard: The Art of Theater VII." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 177-92.

Gussow, Mel. "*Jumpers*: Author is Verbal Gymnast." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 73-76.

- - -. "Stoppard Refutes Himself, Endlessly." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 30-32.

- - -. "Stoppard's Intellectual Cartwheels Now with Music." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 129-34.

Hayman, Ronald. "Architectonic Virtuosity." Bareham 140-49.

- - -. "Double Acts: Tom Stoppard and Peter Wood." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 145-50.

- - -. "The Intellectual, the Communicator, the Technician." Bareham 53-60.

Henderson, Archibald. *George Bernard Shaw: His Life and Works*. London: Hurst, 1911.

- - -. "George Bernard Shaw Self-Revealed." *Fortnightly Review* 125 (May 1926): 433-42.

Hiley, Jim. "Theatre: Tom Stoppard: Clever isn't Everything." *Listener* 17 Mar. 1988. 31.

Hu, Stephen. *Tom Stoppard's Stagecraft*. New York: Longman, 1989.

Hudson, Roger, Catherine Itzin, and Simon Trussler. "Ambushes for the Audience: Towards a High Comedy of Ideas." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 51-73.

Hunter, Jim. *Tom Stoppard's Plays*. London: Faber, 1982.

Hynes, Joseph. "Tom Stoppard's Lighted March." *Virginia Quarterly Review* 71.4 (1995): 342-57.

Innes, C.D. *Modern British Drama 1890-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Jenkins, Anthony. *The Theatre of Tom Stoppard*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

- - -. *Critical Essays on Tom Stoppard*. Boston: Hall, 1990.

Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.

Kelly, Katherine E. *Tom Stoppard and the Craft of Comedy: Medium and Genre at Play*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1991.

Kerensky, Oleg. "Tom Stoppard." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 85-88.

Kuurman, Joost. "An Interview with Tom Stoppard." Page 31.

Levenson, Jill. "Views from a Revolving Door: Tom Stoppard's Canon to Date." *Queen's Quarterly* 78.3 (Aug. 1971): 431-42.

Londré, Felicia Hardison. *Tom Stoppard*. New York: Ungar, 1981.

Loveridge, Lizzie. "The Coast of Utopia." 25 Sept. 2005 <www.curtainupreview.com>.

Maychick, Diana. "Stoppard Ascending." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 231-34.

Nadel, Ira B. "Writing The Life of Tom Stoppard." *Journal of Modern Literature* 27.3 (2004): 19-29.

Nilsen, Don Lee Fred, ed. *Humor in Twentieth Century British Literature: A Reference Guide*. New York: Greenwood, 2000.

O'Connor, Garry. "Two Men on an Ocean Wave." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 172-76.

Orlich, Ileana Alexandra. "Tom Stoppard's *Travesties* and the Politics of Earnestness." *East European Quarterly* 38.3 (2004): 371-82.

Page, Malcolm. *File on Stoppard*. London: Methuen, 1986.

"Parody." 27 July 2007 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parody>>.

"Pastiche." 17 July 2007 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastiche>>.

Paulucci, Anne. *Pirandello's Theater: The Recovery of the Modern Stage For Dramatic Art*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2002.

Pearce, Howard D. "Stage as Mirror: Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*." *MLN* 94.5 (Dec. 1979): 1139.

- Roberts, Philip. "Tom Stoppard: Serious Artist or Siren?" *Critical Quarterly* 20.3 (1978): 84-99.
- Rod, David. K. "The Importance of Carr." Bareham 177-84.
- Rusinko, Susan. "The Last Romantic: Henry Boot, Alias Tom Stoppard." *World Literature Today* 59.1 (1985): 17-21.
- - - . "Tom Stoppard: Parodic Stylist." *British Drama, 1950 to the Present: A Critical History*. Boston: Twayne, 1989.
- Russell, Richard B. "It Will Make Us Friends: Cultural Reconciliation in Tom Stoppard's *Indian Ink*." *Journal of Modern Literature* 27.3 (2004): 1-18.
- Ryan, Carrie. "Translating *The Invention of Love*: The Journey from Page to Stage For Tom Stoppard's Latest Play." *Journal of Modern Literature* 24.2. (16 Apr. 2005) <www.complete-review.com/authors/stoppard.htm>.
- Scolnicov, Hanna. "Stoppard's Intertextual Web." *Assaph: Studies in the Theatre* 11 (1995): 19-37.
- Scott Robinson, Gabriele. "Plays Without Plot: The Theatre of Tom Stoppard." *Educational Theatre Journal* 29.1 (1977): 37-48.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet. The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Oxford: Wordsworth, 1996. 670-713.
- Shulman, Milton. "The Politicizing of Tom Stoppard." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 107-12.
- Shaw, George Bernard. *Our Theatres in the Nineties, II*. London: Constable, 1932.

- - - . "Preface to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*." 16 June 2007 <<http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/lit/plays/MrsWarrensProfession/Chap0.html>>.

- - - . *Selected Plays. Man and Superman*. New York: Vail-Ballou, 1948.

Smethurst, Paul, and Julia Kuehn. "Arcadia." 25 Sept. 2006 <www.LitEncyc.com>.

Sommer, Elyse. "An Overview of Tom Stoppard's Career." 10 May 2005 <www.curtainup.com/stoppard.html> .

Spencer, Charles. "More than Rock'n'Roll." 15 June 2006. 20 Nov. 2006 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2006/06/15/btrock15.xml>>.

"Stoppard: A Chronology." 28 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.sondheimguide.com/Stoppard/chronology.html>>.

Stoppard, Tom. *After Magritte*. London: Faber, 1971.

- - - . *Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon*. New York: Faber, 1975.

- - -. "Pragmatic Theater." *The New York Review of Books*. 23 Sept. 1999 <www.nybooks.com/articles/390> .

Taylor, John Russell. *Anger and After*. London: Methuen, 1977.

- - -. "Tom Stoppard." *The Second Wave: British Drama of the Sixties*. London: Methuen, 1971.

- - -. "TV Drama." *Plays and Players*. (Feb. 1969): 12.

"Tom Stoppard." 28 Aug. 2007 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Stoppard.html>.

Tynan, Kenneth. *Show People*. London: Weidenfield, 1980.

Twisk, Russell. "Stoppard Basks in a Late Indian Summer." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 252-55.

Wardle, Irving. Rev. of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Bareham 70-71.

Watts, Janet. "Tom Stoppard." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 46-50.

Weightman, John. "Mini-Hamlets in Limbo." Rev. of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Bareham 72-75.

Wetzsteon, Ross. "Tom Stoppard Eats Steak Tartare with Chocolate Sauce." Delaney, *Tom Stoppard in Conversation* 80-84.

Wilde, Oscar. *De Profundis*. New York: Avon, 1964.

- - -. Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Eds. M. H. Abrams, et al. Vol.2. London: Norton, 1993. 1628.

- - -. "The Decay of Lying." *The Writings of Oscar Wilde*. Ed. Isobel Murray. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. 215-41.

- - -. *The Importance of Being Earnest*. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Eds. M. H. Abrams, et al. Vol.2. London: Norton, 1993. 1628-67.

"Where Are They Now?". 14 Mar. 2001 <http://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=982682>.

Whitaker, Thomas R. *Tom Stoppard*. London: Macmillan, 1983.

Wright, Elizabeth. *Postmodern Brecht*. London: Routledge, 1989.

Zeifman, Hersh. "Comedy of Ambush: Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*." *Contemporary British Drama, 1970-90: Essays From Modern Drama*. London: Macmillan, 1993. 217-31.

- - - . "Tomfoolery: Stoppard's Theatrical Puns." *Modern British Dramatists*. Ed. John Russell Brown. New Jersey: Prentice, 1984. 85-109.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Kişisel Bilgiler

Adı Soyadı : Aslı TAŞER
Doğum Yeri ve Tarihi : Erzincan / 09.07.1982

Eğitim Durumu

Lisans Öğrenimi : Hacettepe Üniversitesi / İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, 2003
Yüksek Lisans Öğrenimi : Hacettepe Üniversitesi / İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı, 2007
Bildiği Yabancı Diller : İngilizce, Almanca
Bilimsel Faaliyetleri :

İş Deneyimi

Stajlar : 1. Müjgan Karaçalı İÖÖ. / Öğretmenlik, 2003
2. Antalya Havalimanı / Terminal Rehberliği, 2001
Projeler :
Çalıştığı Kurumlar : 1. Gölbaşı Anadolu Kız Meslek Lisesi / MEB, 2007
2. Alper Tunga İÖÖ. / MEB, 2004-2007
3. Artvin Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi / MEB, 2003-2004

İletişim

E-Posta Adresi : aslitaser@yahoo.com

Tarih : 10.09.2007