CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

Stoppard has been writing since 1964 and his dramatic career spans over a period of three decades. Since he is a living dramatist anything that is said about him can only be an interim assessment. He writes plays of ideas with abiding interest in entertaining the audience. He gives his doses of serious message in the mask of the comic and frivolity. In all his plays there is an interplay of the comic and the serious in varying degrees. On the one hand his plays employ sophisticated ideas from philosophy, science and metaphysics. On the other hand he uses farce, detective mystery, magic shows and circus. The blend of the lofty and the trivial is helpful for him to combine the comic and the serious. Through all these devices, both literary and dramatic, he develops a theatricality of his own, which is a singular contribution to modern drama.

STOPPARD’S IMPORTANCE

Stoppard is important as he is able to understand the ethos of the modern era and reflect it in his plays. Today it is the age of common man. History, which has been written with the world view of kings and queens at the centre, is questioned today. People have started rewriting history from
the perspective of the common man. This change from the high class to the common man is seen in various fields. In architecture one hears of the masons declaring open the new buildings. One also hears about children declaring open the children's festival. The same change has come into the field of drama also. The Kings and Queens of Shakespeare's time have given way to the common man. Tom Stoppard is aware of this general change and gives prominence to people who have been the marginalized and hitherto neglected. He chooses ordinary persons and brings them to the centre stage. Because of this new perspective and his penchant for the blend of the comic and the serious, he becomes a dramatist according to the heart of the people of the present times. His dramatic career can be classified into three phases.

THREE PHASES

There are three well-marked phases in Stoppard's dramatic career. In the early phase one sees Stoppard combining the comic and the serious in an even manner. This is done through the themes, settings, characterizations, and through devices both theatrical and dramatic. His themes are absorbing struggles between the desire for freedom and the actual enslavement. Riley in Enter a Free Man, while wanting to be free is caught up in his domestic entrapment. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
Are Dead try to discover pattern and purpose while the script allowed for them circumscribes their freedom resulting in the blend of the comic and the serious. In Frank and Gladys in *If You’re Glad I’ll be Frank* on sees the mechanized and hierarchical society dominating the individual resulting in the individual’s dehumanization and robotization. In this struggle for freedom the characters fail pathetically. Brown and Albert in *A Separate Peace* and Albert’s Bridge respectively are other examples who rebel against the society, unsuccessful all the same. In *After Magritte* one sees the comic and the serious in the process of arriving at objective reality.

What marks Stoppard’s perception in this phase is enlightened relativism. He does not say something is wrong or right in categorical terms. His perception is not either/or but this and that. The reader cannot conclude that Riley’s imaginative flights into impotent discoveries are right or wrong. In so far as Riley is an ineffectual dreamer, living on the kindness of his daughter and wife he is not free. But his imagination and self respect keep him going enabling him survive after every battering. On the one hand his imagination is useless and on the other hand it gives him power to resist social pressures and gives him certain amount of grandeur. Stoppard shows that Riley’s imagination is useless and at the same time necessary. This
kind of approach is called by Stoppard 'leap frog'. Apparently Stoppard denounces one attitude and at the same breath glorifies the very same attitude. He first says A and then says minus A. He does not give the audience any clear cut conclusion. He tries to see the good aspect from every position. This approach will be eventually developed to a very fine degree in later plays like Travesties and Night And Day. The early phase of Stoppard known for the harmonious blend of the comic and the serious, is analysed in this section.

The middle phase is known for the ascendancy of the comic over the serious. This phase is marked by a lot of references to philosophers, like Wittgenstein, Russell, Kant, Zeno and Moore, to literature, art, history and politics. This wide platform helps Stoppard make his plays very comic. His plays are very successful as he is able to relate different fields like philosophy, politics and history. They do not hang in isolation but are made to hold together so that the vision is comprehensive and wholesome. If one takes philosophy, Stoppard not merely brings different schools of philosophy like moral philosophy and logical positivism but fuses into it different disciplines like history, acrobatics, law, medicine and police intelligence. He brings into display lofty philosophical ideas with trivialities like the bow and arrow, hare and
tortoise resulting in the comic and the serious. He links the drawing room, the microcosm, with the cosmos, like the macrocosm of moon landing. He uses the opening scene to create mystery and confusion and then he methodically sets about resolving the mysteries. Dialogue is used as an effective tool to bring about humour. Theatrical devices like acrobatics, rooms in isolation, moon landings are also responsible for the blend of the comic and the serious. Dramatic devices like language games, layered metaphors, parodying conventional genres, flash backs are used in effective manner to bring about the elements of the comic. The third chapter traces how in the plays of the middle phase the comic is in the ascendancy over the comic.

In the final phase there is a conversion in Stoppard. A man who said in his article "Something to Declare" "I burn with no causes" (47) is really a different man in his later career as there is a growth in his social involvement. In the beginning he shied away from public issues and now he is consumed by righteous anger. One who said, "I haven't even got the courage of my lack of convictions" (Whitaker 4), has become a man of courage and conviction. Professional Foul, Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, Night And Day, Dogg's Hamlet, and Cahoot's Macbeth exhibit Stoppard's concern for the topics of the day. The conversion in Stoppard is not like the one on the road to Damascus when Paul had a sudden
conversion but a gradual and steady one. In his early plays the characters resigned themselves to the given situation. But in the later phase the characters are prepared to fight against the oppressive situations.

In the final phase the serious elements take a predominant place over the comic. The fourth chapter analyzes the causes and the characteristics of this conversion in Stoppard. What happened in communist countries and specially his home country Czechoslovakia were largely responsible for this change. Stoppard's vision is imbued with a strong sense of moral vision. This moral vision does not allow him to accept the total destruction of human being. He sincerely believes that human nature is so endowed with gifts that it can withstand any organised oppression. His heroes Alexander in Every Good Boy Deserves Favour and Anderson in Professional Foul are exponents of this deep sense of human dignity. In this phase Stoppard establishes unmistakably that he is the champion of individual freedom. He does this by condemning all forms of oppression. Whereas his earlier heroes, Riley and Albert in Enter a Free Man and Albert's Bridge flee from the society, the new heroes Alexander and Anderson incarnate themselves in the struggle against the society and are prepared to act decisively. It is in and through this involvement and preparedness to act decisively their greatness shines and not through their
withdrawal. This process of involvement brings out the best in the characters as evident in Anderson's conversion in Professional Foul and Alexander's defiance in Every Good Boy Deserves Favour. In Professional Foul Stoppard does not create Anderson like an angelic being. He is like anybody else with a good bit of bad qualities. But still Anderson rises up to the occasion and is prepared to walk the narrow path though it involves inconveniences like changing the topic of his lecture, changing his ethical stand, risking the danger of arrest by smuggling Hollar's thesis.

Stoppard achieves seriousness through the use of different devices both theatrical and dramatic. The reversal of Anderson's ethics is a theatrical device, which is tied up with Catastrophe theory in mathematics and professional foul in football, through which Stoppard enhances the serious elements. He does a similar thing with Alexander by linking him to such things like different types of madness, school, orchestra and imaginary orchestra. The interplay of different spheres finally creates an absorbing and serious struggle. Even when Stoppard turns his attention to journalism, love and espionage, the serious elements come to the fore submerging the comic.
FINDINGS

BLEND OF THE COMIC AND THE SERIOUS

The thesis tries to find the various levels at which the comic and the serious combine in the different phases of Stoppard. In the early phase the comic and the serious are evenly blended while in the second phase the comic elements take the top position and in the third the serious elements predominate over the comic.

MORAL VISION

Stoppard does not have a spelt-out belief system. But still one can find that he has a very deep sense of moral vision. It is because of this there is conversion in Stoppard. He affirms human values and human life. In Professional Foul and Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, he writes about human beings caught up with the right and wrong. No system, however good it may be, which denies individual freedom is good enough for him.

CLEVER EXECUTION

Stoppard is an architect. He equips himself well by reading a lot before embarking on a play. Stoppard is known for neatness, precision and clever execution. One may find that the opening scenes are very confusing, but as the play
progresses Stoppard solves all the mysteries. After Magritte is a fine example of initial chaos and later clarity. Stoppard may choose the chaotic and the uncertain as material for his play, but what he writes is in no way chaotic. When he starts writing his plays he does not have a ready made blue print. He has no clear idea of exactly where they are going or exactly how they will get there, keeping in line with his typical 'not knowing'. Stoppard works by neatness and precision resulting in the meticulous tying of loose ends.

NEW TYPE OF HERO

Stoppard creates a new type of hero. According to him the hero succeeds if he can control his context and fails if he disappears into the existing context. They are not towering figures, but the ordinary, fringe and periphery people. They are thrown into a world where there is no reason or rhyme. They look at the world from such angles that they are able to get at the victim's perspective.

THEATRICAL PARASITE?

Sometimes Stoppard is accused of being a theatrical parasite. Robert Brustein says, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead is a theatrical parasite, feeding off Hamlet, Waiting for Godot and Six Characters in Search of an
Author" (149). It is true that Stoppard borrows from philosophers, writers, artists and playwrights very freely. Stoppard himself admits it when he says about his first play he says, "first play tends to be that—it tends to be the sum of all the plays you have seen of a type you can emulate technically and have admired" (Hudson 4). Before going into the accusation of being a parasite, one must distinguish between what is borrowing and what is being influenced. Borrowing is a process wherein the author is aware of what he borrows while a writer is said to be influenced, when there are references to other works by an unconscious process. It is interesting to note what Stoppard has to say about borrowing. Stoppard compares himself to a traveller who is checked for customs clearance. The traveller finds a lot of objectionable goods in his luggage without his knowledge. The traveller has not intended to carry all these objects. But all the same they are there to his great embarrassment. Artistic influence is something like that. One may find lot of things in Stoppard but they are all not just copied. Many of them are there without his conscious intent of copying. What matters is what one does with the borrowed material. Certainly Stoppard puts his Midas touch to whatever he borrows. Even though Stoppard borrows large portions from Hamlet, the way Stoppard portrays Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is different from the way Shakespeare does.
For Shakespeare these two are just attendant lords whom he can dispense with. From such negligible character Stoppard weaves a story. In what he borrows Stoppard puts his own Stoppardian stamp. Even in Shakespeare one can see that he has borrowed freely from many sources. So there is nothing wrong in borrowing. One has to find what the playwright does with what he borrows. Stoppard, though he borrows, brings out a different mould through the process of selection, reshuffling, combination and synthesis. So Richard Andretta is right in pointing out that "his plays are neither slavish imitations nor incoherent pastiches, but unique experiences of offering a fresh approach to and a new perception of reality (1). So Stoppard is certainly not a parasite. By repeating fragments of masterworks in a new context Stoppard makes the audience see them in a new way.

CHARACTERIZATION

Another accusation about Stoppard is that his characters are not true to life. This may be true of his plays in the early phase. In the later phases one can see some change especially in the last phase. Anderson in Professional Foul, Ruth in Night And Day Annie in The Real Thing and Hapgood in Hapgood are convincingly portrayed. He is able to probe the depth of human beings and study human behaviour. It is precisely because of characterization that
the elements of the serious dominate in the last phase. The position where Anderson starts and the position where he ends up show a remarkable process of change taking place in Anderson. Similarly Alexander is shown as a person who is unwavering in spite of heavy odds. Hapgood is a fine example of remarkable conflict between duty as a spy and emotion as a mother. So the accusation that Stoppard's characters are not true to life cannot be applied to all plays.

STEREOTYPE

Some critics find fault with Stoppard saying that his plays lack depth. It is true that Stoppard's major interest is in entertaining the audience. He does not have an avowed interest in giving a message. Message is only incidental to his plays. But to say that his plays lack depth is not correct. His plays do have serious message. About his plays he tells kenneth Tynan, "What I like to do is to take a stereotype and betray it" (51). What he means by stereotype is the use of stock characters, the ordinary men and women, in other words the common types. Stoppard's characters are poor imitations and secondaries, all of them versions of the average thinking man. That does not mean that they lack depth. He takes the ordinary characters like professors, butlers, lords, detectives, artists and journalists and brings them to the centre stage. He takes the ordinary
characters and betrays them to create a structure of parody, which helps him to entertain the audience. In Travesties he takes Carr an ordinary worker in the consulate, and makes him think that he is the top official there and betrays him by making Carr's memory unreliable. In Albert's Bridge, Fraser for instance sees order when he is on top of the bridge and is compelled to go back to the society. He does not find that order when he comes down the bridge and meets the society. This is what is meant by taking the stereotype and reversing it. In Albert just the opposite happens. He too finds order on top of the bridge but he does not want to go back to the society. Finding order makes Fraser go back to the society while it makes Albert escape from the society. Thus Stoppard states one position and reverses it. Creating a stereotype and its betrayal is the Stoppardian parody. He does the same in Travesties as James Joyce, the great creative writer, the author of Ulysses, is shown to be involved in a mundane and a trivial affair of a lawsuit over the price of five tickets. Joyce's reputation as a great novelist is betrayed by the triviality of the incident. If Stoppard takes the stereotype and reverses it, it is to heighten the sense of the comic by bringing together the epic events of history and art within the context of the trivial. His plays have depth in so far as he portrays characters who are willing to suffer for the sake of some
noble cause as in Professional Foul and Every Good Boy Deserves Favour. Through his plays Stoppard establishes that caring for individuals who are in need of help is a supreme virtue. Stoppard always condemns selfishness, self isolation and narcissism. So to say that his plays lack depth is incorrect.

WIDE SPECTRUM

Stoppard draws from a variety of fields like literature, philosophy, art, history, journalism, music, physics and mathematics. Writers like Shakespeare, Sophocles, Beckett, Bolt, Joyce, Chekhov, Eliot, Wilde, Agatha Christie, Pirandello and a host of others have been the inspiration for Stoppard and he borrows large sections from these writers. Philosophers like Wittgenstein, George, Moore, Zeno, Kant and Russell are alluded to in his writings. Artists like Tzara and Magritte are discussed in plays like Travesties and After Magritte. The first world war and historical events form the backdrop for Travesties. This wide variety is one of the characteristics of Stoppard's writing.

THEATRICALITY

A play can be a piece of literature or a performance. For Stoppard a play is a performance and not a text to be
studied. As a performance it relies on theatricality. And hence next to the blend of the comic and the serious, the most striking feature in Stoppard's writing is theatricality. Stoppard and theatricality cannot be separated as it is so intrinsic to his craftsmanship. Theatricality refers to those aspects of a play which stress the dimension of performance. Stoppard's plays are full of theatricality. In fact if some of his plays fail, like A Separate Peace, it is because they lack theatrical elements. Enter a Free Man is a study of double lives lived by characters. Stoppard has presented this in theatrical terms by the double stage signifying the pub (stage left) and home (stage right). The double stage objectifies the double life lived by his characters. The pub projects an explicitly theatrical vitality and the home stands for humdrum reality. In Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, theatricality is game playing. Ros and Guil have been tossing coins for eighty five times and every time it is heads. Stoppard wants to present the confusion and lack of purpose in modern life. This cannot be presented in better way than the spinning of coins where there is even breakdown of the laws of probability. The theatricality of game continues through out the play. When Guildenstern meets the player on his way to Elsinore, he calls him to bet on a toss. When Guildenstern pretends to be Hamlet, Guil and Ros play games of wordplay.
Rosencrantz and Guilderstern play again in choosing the fist which has the coin. So the game playing is the way in which Stoppard conveys his message in theatrical terms.

In Jumpers theatricality reaches new heights. The theatrical elements are so skilfully interwoven with other elements of the play that theatricality becomes very significant for the interpretation of the play. The acrobatics of the gymnasts resulting in a human pyramid is the major theatricality of the play. The jumping of the acrobats is a theatrical expression of what Stoppard says, "there is very often no single, clear statement in my plays" (Hudson 6). The image of jumpers very well symbolises mental acrobatics. In his arguments there is infinite 'leap-frogging'. He does not confine himself to any one view as can be seen in Travesties and Night And Day. This intellectual process of Stoppard which involves statement, refutation, rebuttal of refutation is best symbolised in these acrobats. The theatricality of acrobatics is the key to the interpretation of the play. The play deals with moral philosophy and logical positivism. Philosophy is itself a jugglery of words involving lot of jumping. Mental acrobatics are needed to justify one's position in philosophy. From this sense also the image of the acrobats is very significant. The acrobats continue through the play in the members of the Radical Liberal party. Finally the
jumpers find their place in the coda of the play at the end. The coda highlights the weakness of George in putting his moral philosophy to action. All his arguments are mere jugglery, mere jumping. George is only an empty armchair philosopher. All his moral arguments cannot even make him come out with a whisper of protest when Archbishop Glegthorpe is killed.

Stoppard again uses the double stage technique in Jumpers. The study of George and the bedroom of Dotty are the spaces of double stage. George is busy with his paper, writing and rehearsing while Dotty is confined to her room having lost all interest in life. The loss of interest in life is theatrically shown by confining her to the bedroom and making her even literally grapple with a dead body of McFee.

In Travesties the theatricality is the constant interruption of Carr's dictation with historical realities. In Night And Day Stoppard uses "Ruth" as a theatrical device. What Ruth thinks is spoken aloud so that the audience alone knows what she thinks. The audience is made to think that Ruth and Milne are growing in affection. But this is a pure fantasy. The audience comes to know that it is purely imaginary only after sometime. It is a theatrical trick played on the audience.
The orchestra is a theatrical device in Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, which is symbolic of the total madness that exists in a totalitarian regime. In Hapgood one sees the theatricality of games. The switching of towels and brief cases is the theatrical representation of the difficulty involved in arriving at truth. In The Real Thing, the theatricality is the movement from stage to life and life to stage. Only at the end of the first scene the audience realizes that what has been going on is a repetition from another play. In After Magritte, the opening scene is theatrical with number of bizarre things happening. Only as the play progresses things fall into the right perspective.

From all these one can see that Stoppard and theatricality are inseparable. Theatricality is an essential part of the living drama. This technique is made use of by playwrights because they realize that the audience is watching the performance and they are not just passive spectators. Stoppard is fully aware of the fact that in the theatre the differences between author, actor and audience disappear. This union can be achieved only through exploiting theatricality. Commenting on Stoppard's theatricality Jim Hunter says, "Stoppard's playing is about thinking; but his claim on our attention is not as a thinker but as a player. His equations and solutions are theatrical" (154).
STOPPARDIAN

Today "Stoppardian" has become a by-word. It refers to a style of writing marked by ideas, fun, theatricality, leapfrogging and betraying the stereotype. Stoppard's writing is known for parody and travesty. One of his plays is titled Travesties. He travesties the historical celebrities like Joyce, Lenin and Tzara. He presents specific historical sites like the library, drawing room and the professional study in Zurich in 1917. But the action does not take place in these places but in Carr's mind. Thus Stoppard parodies the setting. In The Real Inspector Hound Stoppard parodies the detective plays and the drama critics. In Travesties Stoppard parodies two levels of existence. Lenin, Joyce, Tzara and Carr are from historical level. Gwendolyn, Cecily and Bennet are from the fictional level. But Stoppard parodies them by giving all of them all the same ontological status in Travesties. There is parody when perception is made to be unreliable. When Archie is kneeling before Dotty and kissing her hand, the perception is unreliable. One may interpret this as a sexual affair between them or as a treatment by Archie for her skin ailments. What is what is not clear. The unreliability of perception is more obvious in After Magritte. Different people see the same scene but give differing accounts. The accounts may be different but the perceptions are genuine and valid all the same. Along
with parody and travesty, wordplay, puns, jokes and paradox are the characteristics of Stoppard's writing. Richard Andretta defines 'Stoppardian' as "a well structured comedy with conflicting points of view that mixes seriousness with farce and is filled with jokes and all kinds of word-play" (2).

STOPPARD AND ART

Stoppard is on the side of 'art for art's sake.' For him art is an end in itself and not a means. By writing about some injustice he believes that the artist does not bring about an immediate change in the society. He speaks of Auden who says that his poems have not saved a single Jew from the gas chamber. "When Auden said his poetry didn't save one Jew from the gas chamber, he'd said it all. ... I've never felt this - that art is important. That's been my secret guilt, I think it's the secret guilt of most artists" (Watts 12). He takes up the question whether artists need to justify their existence in Artist Descending the Staircase and Travesties. There is elaborate and extensive reference to artist Magritte in After Magritte. He basically believed that all the world is a stage and all are actors. That is why he often removes the barrier between the audience and the actor and in The Real Inspector Hound, the members of the audience become actors. In the play The Real Thing, the
stage becomes life and life becomes the stage. Commenting on committed art in his article "Serious Frivolity", Stoppard says, "I tend to over react against the large claims of committed theatre so-called, because it is an ill-afforded luxury for an artist to convince himself that he has effectively done his bit because he grapples with important problems".

Stoppard uses art as social protest in Cahoot's Macbeth. When the Czech artists face repression as they perform Macbeth, their art is not only a piece of acting but an act of political dissidence. Stoppard believes that art is important not because it conveys political message but because it provides the moral matrix. He says, "Art is important because it provides the moral matrix, the moral sensibility, from which we make our judgements about the world" (Hudson 14).

STOPPARD AND POLITICS

Stoppard's views on politics are related to his views on art. He does not think of art as a tool for political change. He believes in democracy and he is on the side of the rightwing politics. He swears by individual freedom. His plays like Professional Foul, Every Good Boy Deserves Favour and Night And Day give expression to his views on politics. Issues like human rights and freedom of speech are very dear
to the heart of Stoppard. Very often critics find fault with Stoppard saying that his plays are not political. This was so only in the first decade of his dramatic career. After 1974, he has become openly political. He became so vocal that he appealed to British government not to participate in the Olympics at Moscow in 1980. This outspoken man can be seen also in his support for Czechoslovakian Chartists and in his involvement in Amnesty International. He condemns psychiatric abuse in the name of action against political dissidence. In the totalitarian societies which suppressed individual rights, he was able to see the immortality of human spirit. His political plays give artistic expression to this vision of human nature. Stoppard kept himself away from political issue since he himself was a guest in England. But there is growth in Stoppard. Because of the historical necessity there is a change in him making him move toward direct confrontation with political issues. He is against governments which deny freedom of expression because he considers freedom of expression as the most priced treasure and without it whatever is offered is unacceptable to him. His political plays are savage indictments of such repressive regimes.

STOPPARD AND THE LANGUAGE

Stopnard, though a foreigner, has mastered the use of
English language. In fact that he is a foreigner seems to be an advantage as one of his directors has said: "you have to be foreign to write English with that kind of hypnotized brilliance " (as quoted in Londrè 1). The name Stoppard conjures up wizardry of words. Stoppard came into the scene of drama when his contemporaries deemphasized language. But Stoppard's works are replete with sparkling interplay of puns, *quid-pro-quos*, jokes and literary allusions making him one of the most dazzling hits and surprising minds ever to turn up in the history of the British Theatre". Clive Barnes in his article "Stage: Stoppard's Murder Play About Philosophy", says, "Stoppard's particular skill is in verbal and intellectual wizardry. I cannot really think of any English writer since John Donne who has been able to joke in such amusing philosophical terms" (36). Stoppard actually exploits the potentialities of the language to such an extent that the audience wonders whether it has gone for a drama or a debate. The audience is led to the sheer pleasure of experiencing the density and richness of which the language is capable of. He is not only a spectacular craftsman but also a master in exploring and exploiting language. He in his article "Something to Declare" says, "For lot of writers the language they use is merely a fairly efficient tool. For me the particular use of a particular word in the right place, or a group of words in the right
order, to create a particular effect is important; it gives me more pleasure than to make a point which I might consider to be profound."

Through his lanauge Stoppard affirms the capacity of man to communicate. This approach shows a marked difference since other prevalent theatres like absurd theatre and living theatre devalued language. Absurd theatre attempts to show the futility of speech highlighting the incommunicable than the communicable. The absurd theatre, "dramatizes the banalities that form everyday language - words and phrases that mean nothing and indeed block communication" (Cahn 21-22). The living theatre is an attempt to trace man to his primitive nature where emotion was the order of the day. In general modern drama considers language as no more a mediator of thought and feeling. Even silence is shown as one form of dialogue. But Stoppard is totally different. His language helps him to provide the verbal fire works and rational debate marked by brisk pace, literary allusions, double and triple meanings. When asked, "generally speaking, are long speeches dangerous?", he answers "I always think that they're the safe parts of the play, and they've proved to be so" (Hayman 11).

Language cannot be the same in a drama as in a poem or a novel. In a poem or a novel the reader has time to go back
to the subtlety, complexity and ambiguity of language. In a play the audience has no time to linger over the subtleties of meaning in a diction. So language has to be simple to a great extent in a play. In Stoppard one may even say that the extravaganza of language is a hindrance to the theatre goers. He overcomes this difficulty by presenting tableaux in the opening scenes. So the audience is not only in for the brilliance of word play but also to a feasting to the eye. Jim Hunter makes a right assessment when he says, "To Stoppard language is an aspect of human life; it happens to be one he enjoys and in which he has flair" (94). There are people who say that Stoppard's brilliance inhibits the audience from appreciating the underlying design and it is being merely by too clever. There are admirers and detractors as Hersh Zeifman points out:

Puns are both the glory and the bane of Stoppard's critical reputation. On the one hand, his plays are feasts of language, in a time of almost universal famine, it is hardly surprising that audience have greatfully responded by gorging themselves into paroxysms of delight. ... On the other hand, there are those "virtuous few" who wish to abolish theatrical cakes and ale. (175)

Stoppard uses language for creating a good deal of comedy and very often he goes beyond joking. It plays a major role in fusing the comic and the serious. Stoppard has a special ear for the words with a special gift of incorporating
contradictions and double truths. Stoppard infuses language with new vitality. In order to use it as a social protest, he makes experiments with it. 'Dogg' in Dogg's Hamlet and Cahoot's Macbeth are remarkable instances of Stoppard's genius for inventiveness. He uses it as a subversive medium to bewilder the repressive powers. By mixing the Dogg and Shakespeare's felicitous expressions Stoppard contrasts the free and the totalitarian societies.

Stoppard uses the different registers of language linking them with uncommon skill. The idea of foul has its ramifications in the different registers of football, police, philosophy and ethics. He does the same with the idea of jumping in fields like philosophy, acrobatics, politics and ethics. Because of this extraordinary gift, Stoppard makes his plays very academic in nature. Jim Hunter speaking about Stoppard's language says, "The brilliance also seems to have an academic element: he might well be taken for a University Wit" (93).

The language of the newspaper receives special treatment in Night And Day and Professional Foul. Stoppard, in fact, used to spend many hours in going through the daily newspapers. He himself had been a journalist. The reports of the sports journalists in Professional Foul are quite funny as they caricature cliches in sports columns.
Stoppard uses language as a vehicle of social status. Addresses with full names and short names like Mr. Thompson, Thompson, Tommy, Tom and address with titles like My Lord, Your Lordship, and designation, with just A, B, C all go to depict the hierarchical society. The social stratification and social nuances are brought out through this clever use of the language.

Stoppard also uses language to reveal the character make up. Anderson is for instance oblivious to what is going on around him except the football match. His automatic response about Prague, thinking it is about a person, shows that he is least interested in life, peoples and values. His response to Hollar when he says that he is a cleaner also brings out his snobishness.

Stoppard's skill in the use of language is revealed in naming his characters and plays. Moon and Boot are characters who stand for the mind and action respectively. Scott and Oates are legendary characters involved in the Antarctic expedition and moon landing. The qualities of Oates in the expedition and Scott in the moon landing are just reversed. Other names like Jumpers, Dotty, Gotobed, Hapgood, Gladdy and Frank are self revealing. The titles of the plays like Enter A Free Man, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Jumpers, Travesties and Professional Foul are rich in
their varied signification attesting to the mastery of language.

Stoppard also uses foreign languages like Latin, Spanish, French and Russian in an effective manner. Dirty Linen opens with characters speaking foreign languages. Coklebury - Smythe: Toujours la politesse (French, Always good manners). Mcteazle - Noblesse oblige (French, those who are nobly born must act accordingly) For one full page the characters speak foreign languages. In Travesties for three pages the characters speak foreign languages. In Travesties one comes across the act of assembling meaningless jumble of words resulting in poetry. Stoppard wants to make fun of the older tendency that to speak in one's mother tongue was below one's dignity. He also uses foreign languages to create an aura of mystery.

Stoppard puts the language to deft use in bringing about vitality and energy as there is an avalanche of words both for comic and serious effect. In Travesties Cecily says:

In England the rich own the poor and the men own the women. Five per cent of the people own eighty percent of the property. (T 78)

These three lines can match any revolutionary document. Then the avalanche of words start: revisionism--of economism
—opportunism—liberalism—of bourgeois anarchist individualism (78). In Dirty Linen the names of hotels come down like an avalanche of words which makes the whole thing very comic.

Charing Cross, Coq d'Or, Golden Ox. Charing Cross, Coq d'or, Golden Ox. Charing Cross, Old Door and the Golden Cock. (DL 25)

Stoppard writes out of love for language with an avowedly intellectual fascination for things difficult to express. He dared to be different from the run of the mill. Jim Hunter brings out the multifarious gifts of Stoppard in the clever use of the language as he says:

Stoppard's respect or enjoyment of language appear in traditional rhetoric, in languages as codes to be learnt, in sound-music, in 'foreign' patterns with a single language, in the variety of linguistic register, and in the creative suggestion of words. (108)

STOPPARD AND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Stoppard espouses in his writing the ethos of modern man. Modern man has lived through the agony of two World Wars. There is a general sense of restlessness, meaninglessness, breakdown of established social values, disorganisation and frustration. Stoppard shares this general anguish. He fully understands that man is a victim of this absurd and bizarre world. The life of modern man is
fraught with cruelty and oppression. It is not easy to change these conditions. But at the same time man cannot cave in and surrender to this insane world. Through this apparent collapse of love, rupture of human relationships, absence of divine presence and justice and the moral breakdown man is called to find pattern and meaning. Stoppard takes upon himself the task of giving dignity to this tattered humanity. He embarks on the task of creating characters who will be appealing to humanity so disjointed. Hence the need for his characters to be struggling but not surrendering. They must find meaning in the chaotic and meaningless existence.

Commenting on the achievement of Stoppard, Victor Cahn says:

In Stoppard's latest plays his protagonists have sought specific channels through which to pursue meaning and to find significance for themselves. They seek faith in rationality. They seek faith in relationship with other people. They seek faith in their humanity. Their battles are not necessarily successful. But the very struggle brings dignity to life and adds to the drive to reach beyond absurdity. (155)

NEW VISTAS

This research has delimited itself to the area of the interplay of the comic and the serious in Stoppard's plays.
Further research is possible to make a study of Stoppard's adaptations like Tango. Another profitable area would be to study Stoppard's plays in relation to the works borrowed by him.

ONE MINUTE STOOPPARD

In Dogg's Hamlet Stoppard provides one minute Hamlet. Similarly if one were to think of one minute Stoppard it could read as follows: Stoppard is a playwright of ideas rather than characters. His extraordinary skill in the use of language and exceptional use of theatricality are marked features. He revels in exploring the nature of truth. He has a singular gift of combining the comic and the serious. In his arguments he is Janus-faced as he looks forward and backward. He believes in moral order and moral vision. Ethical questions like human rights and freedom of speech are very dear to his heart. He makes his own the chaos and the anguish by modern man. He has an intense sympathy for the underdog and great affection for ordinary people. He takes a stand in which he affirms moral responsibility and individual freedom. He does not thrust his views through his plays on the audience. He allows the audience to make sense out of them. In Stoppard's plays, "There is a coherent, gradual and utterly serious discussion of human values,"
presented within the most felicitously imaginative comic structures" (Brassell 268).

The main argument of the thesis throughout has been to show the intermingling of the comic and the serious in various proportions. At every stage of his dramatic career Stoppard has something serious to convey in terms of the message, all the time remaining a master entertainer. It is really hard to believe that someone so entertaining can also be so serious and profound.