CHAPTER FOUR
COMEDY OF CONVERSION

THE ASCENDANCY OF THE SERIOUS

There are three clear phases in Stoppard. In the early phase one can see the blend of the comic and the serious with equal stress. As he moves into his middle phase, one can see the ascendancy of the comic although the serious elements are present. When Stoppard moves into the last phase, since 1977, one can find the ascendancy of the serious over the comic. There is clear conversion in him though comedy is not given up altogether. Hence in this chapter it is proposed to analyse Stoppard's comedy of conversion.

The change from the concerns of the earlier plays to the present plays is quite pronounced. There is an identifiable growth from introspection to outward looking, from naval gazing to political incarnation, from illusion to forefront action. One can see winds of change in Stoppard as he no more busies himself in the private world of human beings. His characters are called upon to exercise their will in such a way that they are no longer fringe characters but central characters making momentous decisions. The last phase may be called socially conscious phase wherein Stoppard is interested in the common man and in the topics
of the day. Arthur Saltzman clearly points out the shift in Stoppard's approach in the following words:

Stoppard has consistently investigated the marginal man, the character standing on the fringe of the central action, tentatively placing first one foot and then the other into the arena of activity. In *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, *Professional Foul* and *Night and Day* his characters are forced to renounce that marginal status for being an insufficient and finally insupportable response to the profound challenges of conscience which are thrust upon them. (79)

CAUSES FOR THE SHIFT

In what might be attributed as causes for this change could be Stoppard's own life experiences. Stoppard was born in Czechoslovakia, known for political oppression, just before the Nazi invasion. His father, Thomas Straussler, fled from Czechoslovakia, taking his family to Singapore where he died during World War II. Tom Stoppard and his mother settled down in India. His mother remarried and eventually settled down in England. Stoppard takes his name from his step father. Stoppard in his formative years, lived in many countries and spoke many languages. The thought that his father died in the hands of enemies is deep down in his heart. This childhood experience of alienation was responsible in making Stoppard to be busy with the politics of the time. A man who was assiduously keeping himself away
from the social concerns and political affairs could not any further do so. He had to express his mind with regard to the political systems and take a stand for or against. His experience as a young boy is beautifully captured in the following words: "Before he was nine years old ... Stoppard had lived in several countries, each subject to war time pressures. This international living might have contributed to Stoppard's keen awareness of international political issues" (Rothstein 36).

Another reason which possibly contributed to this change is Stoppard's experience in England. If he had not come to England, he might have been at the most a playwright like Vaclav Havel, under the oppressed conditions in Czechoslovakia. While in England he had learnt about the arrest of Vaclav Havel, a Prague playwright. Meanwhile Charter 77, a document signed by 300 Czech intellectuals, was becoming very popular and it was putting pressure on Czechoslovakian government to respect human rights particularly the freedom of speech. Stoppard was also a member of the Amnesty International and in that capacity had visited Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. He had the personal experience of oppression as his own suitcases had been scrutinized in these countries. In 1978, when the Prisoner of Conscience year was celebrated Stoppard took active participation in that movement. The rally took out on
that occasion condemned governments which treated mental homes as punishment camps. In an article "Prague: The story of the Chartists", he says, "The events of 1977 are in direct line with a process which since 1968/1969 has turned Czechoslovakia into a weird, upside-down country where you can find boilers stoked by economists, streets swept by man reading Henry James in English" (15). The political oppression in his home country Czechoslovakia, and his own unpleasant experiences when he visited Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia as a member of Amnesty International made him think deeply about the political systems that obtained. Because of his free growth and the atmosphere of respect for individuals in England, he was unable to accept any political system that was suppressive by nature. All these experiences had awakened in him the political consciousness. The change in Stoppard can be summed up in the words of Yorick Blumenfeld:

English dramatist Tom Stoppard plays the fastest game of the theatrical tennis today. His backhand is superb, his volleys are dramatically impeccable. ... But until recently Stoppard's game was also cool, detached, cerebral. What was missing from his work was the sense of political or even emotional commitment ... Ten years ago he wrote, 'I burn with no causes'. Today there is fire. (90)
In a play like Jumpers, one can see Stoppard being interested in the private man only. Even if he deals with any public problem it is without any direct involvement of the public world. The conflict is confined to only the setting, character and imagery, whereas in the new phase, one can see the emergence of the public man. It is no more withdrawal which is prominent in the early phase but incarnation in social issues. Recent works of Stoppard focus on social responsibility and the need for taking a stand.

Stoppard has very often been asked about his reluctance to write plays with social issues. Now he responds to this criticism and his plays become predominantly serious. Plays like Professional Foul, Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, Night and Day put to rest this criticism. Stoppard demonstrates that he is not an amorphous jelly fish. He manifests his political stand in these plays as a response to the critics who constantly complained about the absence of social commitment in his early dramas. The plays deal with problems of human rights as never shown in his plays before. Stoppard has come to understand that the escape of the hero from the public world is untenable. He establishes that he can be a committed artist as he has expressed his views forcefully to Kenneth Tynan in the following words:

Of all the systems that are on offer, the one I don't want is one that denies freedom of
expression—no matter what its allegedly redeeming virtues may be. The only thing that would make me leave England would be control over free speech.

In this process of change towards social issues, Stoppard does not change his basic attitude to art and artist as he always mixes the comic and the serious.

CHAMPION OF FREEDOM

Stoppard is the champion of individual freedom which he takes up in his play Professional Foul. He comes to grips with this problem as the individual and the State are locked in a conflict. Stoppard aspires to emancipate the individual, who undergoes suffering in a totalitarian government. In this play Stoppard shows that any thought system which denies human rights is unacceptable to him. For him the ultimate touchstone of any system is the place it accords an individual. No political system is good enough so long as it sacrifices the interests of individuals. It should treat every individual with honour and respect. The importance of individual in relation to the society is brought by Roger Scruton in the following words:

The point is rather that all social relations, and all morality are founded in individual encounters. There cannot be society without the experience of self; and from that experience grows the inescapable sense of a sphere of inviolability. To deny rights is to deny the individuals nenan of
himself as a member of society, and so to deny society. (45)

The play is about censorship and suppression bringing to the forefront the serious theme of Stoppard. There is a philosophy conference namely, "Colloquium Philosophicum Prague 77". Anderson, professor of ethics, McKendrick and Chetwyn, lecturers of philosophy are in a plane en route to the philosophy conference. Philosophy is not the sole concern of Anderson as he combines the trip with a football match. His interest in football match is so much that he is planning to skip some of the sessions in order to see the football match between England and Czechoslovakia.

Pavel Hollar, who has been a student of Anderson, comes to visit him. Now he is a cleaner of lavatories at the bus stand. Pavel Hollar is a highly qualified academician and is unable to get a job commensurate to his skills leaving his talents to get rusted as he is just made to clean lavatories. He rebels against this oppressive situation and wants to make his protest public. Hollar has written a thesis which indicts his totalitarian government and through that gives a clarion call to fight against the oppressive government. Such a choice of the theme makes the play quite serious. Hollar wants Anderson to take the thesis to London so that his friend Volkansky could publish it there. To his dismay, Anderson refuses to oblige him saying that it is
professional foul if he obliged him. Anderson also feels that Hollar would land him in deep trouble if he were to accept his request. Anderson thinks that since he has come at the invitation of the Czech government, he is bound to be loyal to the hosts. If he were to smuggle the thesis of Hollar, he would be acting against the interests of the Czech government. The following text shows the attitude of Anderson.

Anderson ... It is a contract, as it were, freely entered into. And having accepted their hospitality I cannot in all conscience start smuggling.... It's just not ethical.

Hollar But if you don't know you were smuggling it.

Anderson Smuggling entails knowledge.

Hollar If I hid my thesis in your luggage, for instance.

Anderson That is childish. Also, you could be getting me into trouble, ... your action would be unethical on your own terms. (PF 56)

Because of the surveillance of the police Hollar expresses the view that there is danger in his taking back the thesis with him. So Anderson accepts to keep the thesis with him and return it to him on the following day.

As the conference is in progress, Anderson leaves for the football match. On his way to the match, Anderson visits Hollar only to find that the latter's room, is being raided by the police. The police have been searching his room for
nearly twenty long hours. As a result Anderson himself is detained and is forced to miss the football match. He can only listen to the running commentary on the radio. He learns that the English players have made a professional foul. As a penalty for the professional foul the Czechs score their first goal. At the end of the raid, Hollar is arrested on trumped up charges of currencies, linking the arrest as it were with the professional foul.

Anderson sees Mrs. Hollar weeping and in the encounter comes to know what suffering is. Anderson is also moved deeply by the tears of Sacha, Hollar's young son. Seeing all the goings on, Anderson himself goes through a conversion as he rewrites his paper on philosophical basis of human rights and gives up his earlier paper on "Ethical Fictions as Ethical Foundations". Anderson realizes that his paper on "Ethical Fictions as Ethical Foundations" will be an inadequate response in the face of the harsh realities of political oppression and manipulation. So he is prepared to set aside the diplomatic etiquette by preparing altogether a different paper without the knowledge of the organizers. This act of Anderson itself is a professional foul. The organizers are displeased since the present paper is not the one originally circulated by him. Anderson proposes his new topic namely the conflict between the rights of the individual and the rights of the community. It proves to be
a passionate declaration about the moral nature of human rights. The chairman feels uncomfortable over the new paper of Anderson and leaves the stage trying to contact some higher ups over the telephone. Unmindful, Anderson goes ahead with his speech. At this point, loud bells ring and the chairman shouts that there appears to be a fire bringing the colloquium to an abrupt end.

When the philosophers leave, there is a thorough search at the airport. Anderson is specially searched. Anderson smuggles his former student's thesis out of the country by hiding it in Mckendrick's brief case without his knowledge.

THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM

The play deals with the nature of ethical behaviour. The play is an answer to ethics as Richard Buhr states, "Professional Foul is a culmination and clarification of the epistemological and ethical issues that have always dominated Stoppard's important work" (320). Is Anderson right in violating the hospitality of the host country by independently choosing to change the topic of his lecture? Is he right in jeopardising Mckendrick by hiding Hollar's thesis in his luggage in an unethical manner? Finally Stoppard makes free speech to triumph. The whole discussion is couched not only in philosophical terms but also in political and games terms carrying the theme of seriousn...
to all fields in view as Stoppard skillfully blends politics with football and philosophy. This is substantiated by what Lucina Gabbard says:

What constitutes ethical behaviour?... Has he not dishonoured his host country? Has he not placed Mckendrick in danger without his consent? The play answers all of these questions by its interlocking discussion of football, politics and philosophy. The professional foul of the title occurs not only on the football field but also in the field of politics and philosophy. (140)

SERIOUSNESS AND CHARACTERIZATION

The seriousness of the play is brought out through characterization. Stoppard does not even give names to some characters but gives just numbers. In the conflict between the individual and the powers that be, the individual is insignificant as Richard Andretta points out: "The suppression of the individual is highlighted as some characters do not have any name. They are just man 1, Man 2 etc;" (24).

Generally Stoppard is not known for characterization. His characters do not fight against the odds. Usually they seek to escape from the scene of confrontation. Most of his characters are only two dimensional and hence they remain flat characters from the beginning till the end of the play.
But in this phase one sees Stoppard creating poignant characters. The emphasis on the serious results in the change of Stoppard's characterization as Arthur Saltzman says, "With Alexander and Anderson Stoppard breaks new ground, for these are characters who do not cringe from the shambles of sanctuaries; instead they regard the nullification of fiction - making as prelude to truly purposeful, satisfying activity" (79). In these characters, the reader comes to see the human face of the character. In his earlier plays Stoppard explored man detaching himself from the society to realize his aspiration. Here Anderson does not flee from the society. He is able to assimilate reality and transform his abstract theories to suit the concrete reality. About Anderson, Victor Cahn says as follows:

Anderson's world is not one of symbolic gymnasts, mad murders, and bizarre detectives. Its absurdity takes the form of an intense evil in the face of which intellectual speculation can no longer exist in splendid detachment. (148)

In Anderson one can see a spiritual change because he comes into contact with human suffering. He realizes that there can be no absolute moral principles when they come into conflict with human rights. Under the guise of rules and regulations one cannot be oblivious to the problems of human suffering and freedom. He faces the world in which he
is placed and tries to order it by involvement and
incarnation and not indulge in the escape. He undergoes the
first hand experience of totalitarian injustice as he sees
Hollar's room raided and he himself is prevented from going
for the football match. And this experience leads Anderson
to take decisions which could not have been possible in his
earlier state of mind. This newness in the characters of
Stoppard is illustrated by what Paul Delaney says:

Ultimately we see that when such characters do
enact what they believe, their actions are not
depicted as pathetic protests against an absurd
universe. Rather, their actions frequently prove
to be efficacious, capable of making a real and
tangible difference in the world which they
confront. In Stoppard's ostensibly political
plays, that is, we see characters in whose lives
the word of moral precept becomes incarnate in the
flesh of moral action. (86)

In his characterization, Stoppard takes into account
the ground realities and does not present an angel with all
possible virtues. Anderson is a character that comes across
in real life situations with a generous share of foibles.
Though Anderson is an ordinary person, Stoppard invests him
with extraordinary qualities, enhancing the serious nature
of the play. The ordinariness of Anderson is highlighted by
Andrew Kennedy as he says, "the play is structured around a
central character, at first a caricature: the liberal, vague
Anderson is just an ordinary character as he is portrayed as an absent-minded philosopher. When McKendrick asks him whether he knows Prague, he answers him in an absent-minded fashion as can be seen below.

McKendrick Do you know Prague?
Anderson Not personally. I know the name (then he wakes up to that) Oh, Prague, sorry, No, I have never been there. (PF 45-46)

Anderson is no angel and has many faults. Besides being absent minded, his knowledge of philosophy is nothing commendable. He is not a man burning with passion for knowledge. He is not one who keeps up his reading habits in order to update his knowledge. His interest in football is almost an obsession. In fact he arranges his conferences in such a manipulative way that he can watch football matches wherever he goes. Thus he cleverly exploits Czech government’s hospitality to indulge in his favourite pastime. He is only a theoretician with regard to ethics as he has come only to preach and not to practice. An inbred evasion in him he backs out when he is asked to smuggle Hollar’s thesis. He is an armchair philosopher who is far removed from reality. He is a typical man of the ivory tower. When Hollar says that he is a cleaner, he does not fully understand the implication as can be seen in the following text.
Hollar I am a what do you say, a cleaner

Anderson (With intelligent interest) A cleaner? what is that?

Hollar (Surprised) Cleaning. Washing. With a brush and bucket. I am a cleaner at the bus station.

Anderson You wash buses?

Hollar No, not buses - the lavatories, the floors where people walk and so on.

Anderson Oh, I see, you’re a cleaner. (PF 52)

In addition to the faults of being absent minded, lacking enthusiasm for knowledge, being manipulative, being theoretical, Anderson is shown as one who looks at sex magazines stealthily.

From the ordinary passenger of a character, Stoppard turns out a heroic person as “Anderson at the end of the play attains a certain heroic stature not in standing up for his principles but, ironically, in finding the courage to break those principles when he discovers that they support the suffering and falsehoods that he encounters in Prague” (Buhr 328-29). Moulding such a character from ordinary stuff adds richness to the seriousness of the play. The process in Anderson "is a comedy of conversion - let us call it the liberal's progress from fatuousness to commitment" (Kennedy 474). There is a spiritual odyssey in Anderson. From the status of a nonplaying captain, he gets totally involved and plays the game, sometimes even breaking the rule. Richard
Andretta, the critic, corroborates this view saying as follows:

The armchair philosopher plunges himself into action. The theoretical thinker who maintained a detached attitude towards the problems of everyday life, reassesses his theories and brings them in line with reality; and the ineffectual individual who showed a Prufrockian approach to life is transformed through his exposure to injustice and repression in a totalitarian regime, and through his compassion for the victims of this regime, into a different individual who dares to take risks and is not unwilling to dirty his hands in order to serve a higher moral purpose. (264)

Stoppard brings about the change in Anderson, by bringing about change in the attitude of Anderson. His early attitude and later attitude are similar to two approaches in theology, namely, top down and bottom up. If one begins from God, it is top down, something like deduction in logic. If one begins from human experience or phenomena then it is bottom up, like induction in logic. In the beginning Anderson begins with top down approach. Anderson is busy with epistemology and ethics. Anderson is busy with moral order, principles without any relation to realities. When he comes across real problems like suppression of human talents in Hollar, false accusation and arrest of Hollar, his inability to express his views against the government, there is a complete change in Anderson's approach. He gives
up the armchair approach and starts philosophising from the actual situation. That makes him a totally a different philosopher. His perspectives on loyalty to host country, ethics and acceptable behaviour gain totally differing meaning. Basic human rights are of paramount importance compared to conventions, rules and institutions. There is metamorphosis in him as he reverts to bottom up approach. Now he goes by practical experience and wisdom and is prepared to change his moral principles. This is emphasized in what Tim Brassell says:

Professor Anderson is fully prepared to commit himself to the kind of humanist ethical proposition on which George ultimately floundered; rather than seeking the foundation stone for his absolute standards, he infers them from within the realm of practical experience. (267)

By making practical experience the road through which Anderson walks for his conversion, Stoppard clothes experience with seriousness. What happens to Anderson is something like what happens to the wise men in Eliot's Journey of the Magi. The wise men had the ordinary experiences as rulers of their people. After seeing the birth of Jesus, there is perceptible change in their experience and outlook. In their earlier experience birth and death were entirely two different entities. In the later experience after seeing the birth of Jesus, they see birth
and death together as one reads in T.S. Eliot's poem,

Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt, I had seen
birth and death,
But had thought they were different. (66)

There is a similar change in Anderson, beginning with one view and ending up with another, through which he is transformed. The transformation in Anderson makes him "move from the private academic life of armchair observer of abstractions to the public political life as an exponent of and participant in a network of moral and political obligation" (Rothstein 43). Such a transformation born out of experience highlights the seriousness of the play. Anderson had different concepts of theory and practice. After the incarnational experience of other people's suffering and his own suffering, he sees theory and practice as one. Sometimes one might read about top officials gathering at a posh hotel to deliberate about the slum dwellers. In the beginning the attitude of Anderson was something like the attitude of such officials, far removed from actual realities as Anderson wags eloquent on "Ethical Fictions as Ethical Foundations". But once he comes to experience the oppressive conditions in Prague, he is completely a different person. He is prepared to give up his interest in World Cup football, linguistic games but rather act in order to benefit the more pressing political exigencies.
Stoppard attains seriousness by making Anderson swim against the current. In the beginning he wanted only to be the spectator of football match. In so long as he remains only an observer, he is ineffective. Only when he gets involved in what is going on in Czechoslovakia, specially after seeing Hollar, Mrs. Hollar and Sacha he realizes that he cannot be indifferent to the misuse of human rights in his host country. He is called to rebel against the existing structure and to think differently. When changing the topic is unacceptable to the organizers, Anderson is bold in bringing out a totally unexpected lecture. What he does is like what any reformer is expected to do. A reformer has to swim against the current and necessarily be an anachronism of his age. When all others think in one way the reformer thinks in a different way. Gandhi did it when he chose to defy while all others accepted meekly that a coloured person could not travel by first class in train. He was an anachronism to the thinking of his times. Similarly Anderson faces the conflict between the routine morality and daring innovation to it. On the one hand he feels that he must obey absolutely the ethical principles which is the thinking of everybody. On the other hand there is an urge in him to help his former student, Pavel Hollar, in the question of human rights. If he were to obey this urge, he must think differently from the common way of thinking. He must be
ready to give up his value system and develop a new one. The choice that Anderson makes is brought out powerfully by what Tim Brassell says, "Professional Foul is, in fact, a powerful demonstration of a central tenet of the socialist dramatist: that man can change his world. Anderson acts from a sense of moral outrage and makes in the process ethical choices which are both brave and admirable" (267-268).

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES

Rule Breaking. It may look like that the play throws to the winds rules and regulations. Since Anderson reverses his earlier ethical stand, it does not mean that anything and everything is permissible. In fact Anderson does not abandon morality. Through this theatrical reversal of ethical stand, Stoppard allows rule breaking in principle. There is no denying that in morality there are some constants which do not change. What the play wants to show is that there can be important exceptions to the rule. Stoppard all the same establishes the serious view that moral rules are universal. This view is corroborated by what Michael Elridge says, "Anderson did not drop out of the moral life when he broke the rule; he raised his understanding of morality to account for an important exception to conventional morality" (206).
PHILOSOPHIC STRUCTURE

Another theatrical device through which the play is made serious is philosophical structure. The play is philosophical in the sense that there are overt references to philosophical theories. Philosopher Wittgenstein's saying, 'whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must remain silent' (Eldridge 201) is given a twist when Anderson says, "whereof we cannot speak, there of we are no means silent" (PF 74). The play also expresses the philosophic view that, "There is a sense of right and wrong which precedes utterance" (PF 90). The play deals with the philosophic problem of universal standard of behaviour which is applicable to all situations in life. The philosophic problem of theory and practice is shown in Anderson. The play also deals with the necessity of breaking moral rules. Apart from such explicit references to philosophy, the theatrical structure of the play itself is philosophical. Though it may not deal with academic philosophy, it deals with philosophic thought. It expounds the theory that a moral rule may not be applicable in every individual case.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

Layered Metaphor. Layered metaphor is one dramatic device through which Stoppard is able to enhance the theme of the serious. 'Professional Foul' is a term taken from the
football game. Professional foul is a deliberate foul when a player knowing fully well that it is a foul, makes it all the same, to further the interests of his team. The professional foul is justified as it is committed in order to secure victory for the team. This metaphor is viewed from different angles as "Stoppard first employs the play's title as a cue for the viewer to consider the similarities between football and ethical fouls" (Buhr 407). The expression 'professional foul' first occurs when Hollar's room is raided.

Man 6 Broadbent - a bad tackle when Deml had a certain goal ... a what do you call it? - a necessary foul.

Anderson A professional foul. (PF 71)

From the football field it is lifted to the conduct of the police officials. They conduct a thorough search of the apartment for many hours. They search the books, drawers, dustbin, wardrobe and everything possible. Finally they too make a professional foul, because they plant money and arrest Hollar saying that they have "discovered" American dollars. Anderson too makes professional foul by changing the topic of his lecture causing much alarm to the Czech officials. The organisers of the conference also make a professional foul by dispersing the audience through the sounding of the fire alarm. Anderson again commits a professional foul by smuggling Hollar's thesis through the
briefcase of McKendrick without his knowledge. Thus the professional foul links the different layers of the play as Joseph Feeney would say:

All five levels of the - soccer/politics/philosophy/academics/characters - come together beautifully and ironically in the play's closing words, 'Ethics is very complicated business. That's why they have these congresses'. (238)

This interplay of different layers adds to the blend of the seriousness and the comic in the play as Andrew Kennedy remarks, "Popular topics, like football and an absent-minded Professor, are woven into an ongoing argument over the rights of the individual in the state. The criss-crossing of three fields - philosophy, football and politics - is as amusing as any of Stoppard's galleries of inter-reflecting mirrors" (473).

THE STOPPARD CATASTROPHE

Through the use of a scientific theory namely catastrophe theory (cf. Evelyn Cobléy 53-65) Stoppard adds to the seriousness of the play. Stoppard tries to account for the change in Anderson by having recourse to a scientific theory, namely 'Catastrophe Theory'. Through this theory the seriousness of the struggle is brought out. It is like the dilemma of Hamlet, 'to be or not to be', as Anderson struggles whether to take the thesis of Hollar or
not to take it. Stoppard raises the tone of the seriousness by clothing Anderson with moral grandeur setting aside for the time being fun and frolic. The seriousness and earnestness come up in the philosophic discussion of 'Catastrophe Theory'. Catastrophe theory can be put in a nutshell in the following words: a rational person will abandon a moral principle when it is inadequate to a given situation. The advantage of Catastrophe theory is that it permits the audience to make sense of the seemingly illogical, inconsistent or unnatural reversal of behaviour. Catastrophe is "any discontinuous transition that occurs when a system can have more than one stable state, or can follow more than one stable pathway of change" (Cobley 57). It is a jump from one state of pathway to another, like water becoming ice. When a dog experiences fear and anger simultaneously one cannot predict whether it will attack or run away. Similar unpredictable human behaviour is explained through catastrophe theory. Mckendrick states this in the play.

Mckendrick It is like reverse gear - no - It's like a breaking point. The mistake that people make is they think a moral principle is infinitely extendible, that it holds good for any situation, a straight line cutting across the graph of our actual situation. (PF 77-78)

This theory is applied to explain the behaviour of Anderson. If Anderson takes the thesis of Hollar with him, he acts
against his conviction that civil laws should be obeyed; if he does not take it, he acts against his natural or humanitarian instinct to help a victim of political oppression. In the initial stage of the play Anderson is happy with his approach. It is only after he comes across Hollar that his value system is questioned and is forced to choose his moral principles or humanitarian interests. In a dilemma like this he decides to take the thesis with him. This change from one behaviour to another is explained through Catastrophe Theory. reversal of behaviour is not inconsistency of character. Anderson who initially thinks that one should not abandon good manners changes himself when he cheats the police by giving them two insignificant papers of the conference instead of the thesis of Hollar. There is further change when he encounters Mrs. Hollar and her son Sacha as he realizes that philosophy and human suffering cannot just be two different entities but have to be inter-related. The catastrophic jump takes place when Anderson changes the content of his lecture. His catastrophic jump continues as he is prepared to flout the laws of the host country by being ready to smuggle the thesis, that too in the briefcase of a friend without his consent. By applying this theory to moral behaviour and ethical choice Stoppard adds richness to the struggle of Anderson. Besides accounting for the reversal in Anderson,
Catastrophe theory, suits Stoppard's view about reality. He does not take the stand of "either or" in any issue. He holds the view that reality is complex and he does not accept saying categorically that something is good or bad, true or false, desirable or undesirable. He always takes an ambiguous stand bringing together a complex network of inter-relationships. For such a viewpoint Catastrophe theory is very helpful for Stoppard as he "resorts to Catastrophe Theory because it permits him to present a complex and accurate picture of how people feel and act" (Cobley 59).

**LANGUAGE**

Though the serious elements abound, the comic is not completely absent and for the comic Stoppard uses language in an admirable way. Stoppard cannot altogether keep away from fun as even when he is very serious fun always pops in. One can see it in his usual language games. As Anderson appears a little different from the photo printed in the brochure, there is the following conversation.

McKendrick: I wasn't sure it was you. Not a very good likeness.

Anderson: I assure you this is how I look.

McKendrick: I mean your photograph.

Anderson: It must be an old photograph....
Anderson  *Young therefore old. Old therefore young.*  
(PF 44 emphasis added)

There is a pun on the words young and old. Anderson appears to be young because the photograph is old.

The same language game can be seen in what American linguistic philosopher Stone says in the play.

Stone  John enters this (table manners) competition and afterwards Mary says, 'well, you certainly ate well' ... well, you didn't eat very well, but at least you ate well. (PF 62)

'Ate Well' is punned up as it can be taken for eating with etiquette or eating a lot.

Stoppard brings out laughter when he uses words to mean the opposite of what is said. When Mckendrick says, I wonder if there'll be any *decent* women? (PF 49 emphasis added), he actually means prostitutes. The conversation between Mckendrick and Crisp, the football player, causes laughter as the former misunderstands 'Left Wing' in football. Thinking that he is a philosopher with left ideology he says:

I hear you're doing some very interesting work in Newcastle. Great stuff. I still like to think of myself as a bit of a left-winger at Stoke. Of course my stuff is largely empirical - I leave epistemological questions to the scholastics. (PF 59-60)

The way the journalists are portrayed also causes lot of
laughter. The reports they send to England are quite funny as can be seen in the following text.

Grayson There will be Czechs bouncing in the streets of Prague tonight as bankruptcy stares English football in the face ...

Chamberlain Wilson, who would like to be thought the big bad man of the English defence merely looked slow-footed and slow witted ... Deml got round him five times on the trot ... using the same swerve, ... making Wilson look elephantine in everything but memory. (PF 74-75)

Commenting on how Stoppard has fun at the expense of journalists Andrew Kennedy in his article "Dissident Comedies" says, "The most successful verbal comedy is the barrage of football reports being telephoned by assorted British journalists who all seem to have a flair for parodying their particular style" (475).

GAME AND LIFE

The interplay of game and life is one dramatic device through which Stoppard adds to the seriousness of the play. 'Professional foul' reminds one of the rules of the game. Stoppard takes the rules of the game and applies it to life itself. It is accepted that when one plays a game one should follow the rules of the game. If one plays basket ball, one must be ready to follow the rule of the game, without which it ceases to be a basket ball game. As one has to follow the rules of the game, Stoppard says that moral principles must
be obeyed. Another way to look at the rules of the game is that it is after all a game. They are just rules and even if one violated, like the professional foul, it is not a serious thing. If moral principles are like the rules of a game, they too are not to be taken very seriously. Stoppard does not accept the second way of looking at the rules of the game. For him the rules of the game are very important. In a foot ball game, intentional fouls, self congratulations and even broken bones are all charged with lot of emotions and are serious matters. They are accepted as part of the intense emotional nature of the game. As rules of the game are important, rules of ethic are important for moral life. The play illustrates that neither a game nor ethics is a closed system since both have emotional natures that cannot be contained by a system of explicit rules. This dramatic device of comparing game and life helps Stoppard to show that when Anderson alters his ethical principle, he is following the unwritten rules of the ethical behaviour. Anderson's breaking the rules of the Czech government intentionally is part of his emotional involvement in the cause of human rights. If professional foul can be accepted as part of the game, violating the ethical rules is also part of the game.
CONCRETE SPACES

By the dramatic use of concrete spaces Stoppard has been able to emphasise seriousness. In his earlier plays Stoppard used to explore characters who detach themselves from the society to realize their aspirations. It is the mind of the protagonist that has been probed. Now Stoppard is not busy with something that takes place in the figment of imagination but with concrete events. Bobbi Rothstein remarks, "The form of the play also reflects its public nature, being not a series of disconnected jumps (as were the events in Jumpers, but a sequence of chronologically ordered scenes progressing from the arrival of the main character in Czechoslovakia to his departure from that country" (41). Professional Foul is about events taking place in the public like the aeroplane, hotel lobby, hotel room, apartment, restaurant, lecture hall and again aeroplane. The actions take place in public places. Anderson speaks to real audiences unlike George in Jumpers who speaks in front of the mirror. The use of such concrete spaces is a dramatic device to bring out the response from Anderson who starts as a vague and uninvolved philosopher. He is not very much involved in the conference. As he is thinking of going out of the conference when Stone is speaking, the Chairman thinks that Anderson wants to ask a question. Embarrassed by the situation he makes some extempore comment on language.
Soon he changes. He realizes that his withdrawal from oppression will not deliver the goods. In Czechoslovakia freedom of expression is the most pressing need. If Anderson's discourse should bear fruit to the people of the country, it should concretely result in the freedom of expression. Mere intellectual speculation cannot be an adequate response to the situation at hand. It calls for involvement rather than detachment and the serious message is communicated through the clever dramatic use of concrete spaces. Anderson who tries to escape the problems of everyday, is shown to assimilate reality and transform his abstract theories to come closer to reality through the dramatic device of concrete spaces. As Joan F. Dean would say, "the more he (Anderson) attempts to exclude himself from the problems of a former student, Pavel Hollar, the more deeply he becomes involved" (91).

INTOLERANCE OF FREE THOUGHT

The background for yet another political play Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, is the same as Professional Foul. Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, subtitled 'A play for Actors and Orchestra', exposes Soviet intolerance of free thought where people are arrested without explanation and hostility is institutionalized. The imprisonment served by Vaclav Havel for his being the spokesman of Charter 77 and the
arrest of Mr. Fainberg during a peaceful demonstration against the Warsaw pact invasion of Czechoslovakia at the Red Square in 1968, provide the inspiration for the play. One Andre Previn extends an invitation to Stoppard to write a play where there could be an orchestra. The play deals with two characters, one who is confined to a hospital room along with another madcap who imagines that he has and hears an orchestra. These are two political prisoners with identical names, namely Alexander Ivanov. Stoppard calls the political dissident Alexander, and the mentally deranged person Ivanov. Alexander is in prison because he has voiced his protest against the unjust arrest of his friend. Ivanov is in the prison for his madness of hearing the imaginary orchestra. The play enables Stoppard to portray how psychiatry is used as a means of torture in hospitals.

Alexander watches Ivanov occasionally striking the triangle. If Ivanov is a triangle striking lunatic, Alexander is a hunger-striking cell mate, who is tortured (in their captor's parlance 'cured of') for not toeing the line of the government. Alexander admits to Ivanov that he is not fond of music while Ivanov shows his interest in music as he says, "we all have some musician in us" (EGBDF 17). For him any man who says that he has no musician in him is a bigot. Alexander explains that he is in the prison because he opposed the government. Ivanov does not
understand Alexander and advises him not to mix music with politics.

As the scene shifts to the school from the hospital, the audience sees a teacher holding a triangle as she tries to teach music to Sacha the young son of Alexander. The hospital and the school are linked not only by the triangle but also by the remark the teacher makes about Sacha's father.

Teacher What then? Detention is becoming a family tradition. Your name is notorious. Did you know that? (EGBDF 19)

Sacha asks the teacher if he will also be sent to the lunatic's prison.

As the scene shifts to the prison, Alexander cries while his son Sacha cries in the school. Ivanov is persuaded by the doctor to say that he hears no orchestra. The doctor is unable to succeed as Ivanov insists that he hears an orchestra.

Doctor Now look, there is no orchestra. We cannot make progress until we agree that there is no orchestra.

Ivanov Or until we agree that there is. (EGBDF 21)

Ivanov returns to the cell to find Alexander sleeping. Ivanov picks up the triangle and plays music at which Alexander is annoyed. Alexander asks him to stop it. Since
Ivanov asks Alexander to narrate about his past, Alexander tells him how he ended up there. He tells him that the government one day arrested a friend of his for possessing a controversial book and put him in a mental hospital for a year and half. When his friends demonstrated against the arrest, they were also arrested.

The scene shifts to the school where Sacha is sitting with a punctured drum. The teacher is annoyed and concludes that what happened in the case of Sacha's father gets repeated here in his son. Anderson was arrested because he first smashed school property, kept bad company, wrote slanderous letters and told lies. Sacha does not accept these charges and says that his papa does not lie.

Then the light focusses on Alexander's face as he continues his narration of his past life about how he was put in the Leningrad Special Psychiatric Hospital, for thirty months with two months of hunger strike. Since the government was against anybody dying out of hunger strike, his son was brought to persuade him to eat.

The scene shifts to the office where the doctor is playing the violin. Alexander enters the office and mistakes the doctor for a patient since he is playing the violin. The doctor tells him that the advanced circle is of the opinion that music is the psychiatric medicine. Actually Alexander
has come to the office to lodge a complaint against the lunatic musician, Ivanov, in his cell. He wants to have a cell of his own. The doctor justifies the decision of the colonel doctor, Rozinsky, in putting him along with Ivanov. Rozinsky, a doctor in philology, thinks that these two must be put in the same cell as they have the same name, another instance of mad logic in a totalitarian society. The conflicting position of Alexander and Doctor, the representatives of the government, can be seen in the following dialogue.

Alexander I was never mad, and my treatment was barbaric.

Doctor Stupidity is one thing I can't cure. ... You have to recant and show gratitude ...

Alexander ... My madness consisted of writing to various people about a friend of mine who is in prison. (EGBDF 28)

The school and the prison are merged as Sacha is brought to the prison. Sacha comes there asking for his father. Ivanov asks Sacha what instrument he plays while Sacha asks him to put him in touch with his father. Realizing that Ivanov is not the real doctor, Sacha cries 'papa'. Alexander tells Sacha not to believe that he was mad, while Sacha in turn consoles his father saying that everything can be all right. Since Sacha wants his father to come home he tells him to tell them lies.
Sacha Tell them lies. Tell them they've cured you. Tell them you're grateful.

Alexander How can that be correct?

Sacha If they're wicked how can it be wrong? (EQBDF 35)

If the two prisoners are to be released, Ivanov should admit that he does not hear an orchestra and Alexander should admit that a sane person is not put into mental hospital. It remains for a bureaucratic blunder of a higher official to solve the problem. He asks wrong questions to wrong persons. When he asks Ivanov whether a Soviet doctor would put a sane person into a lunatic asylum, he answers no. When he asks Alexander if he hears an orchestra he too says no. The official releases both.

MORAL VISION AND SERIOUSNESS

This play is an embodiment of Stoppard's admirable moral vision. For Stoppard man is somebody who is precious as he refuses to accept the view of reducing man to just matter. For him human actions are always moral as he declares, "One thing I feel sure about is that a materialistic view of history is an insult to the human race" (Hudson 13). Paul Delaney corroborates this view as he writes, "Throughout his career ... Stoppard has affirmed that human experience is inherently moral and the Marxist view of human beings as material objects is reprehensibly
reductive" (4). Every Good Boy Deserves Favour is an explication of this serious moral vision. It is a clear instance of Stoppard's capacity to express social indignation and a firm moral viewpoint. Here Stoppard puts his theory into practice as he creates in Alexander the quintessence of courage. Alexander is like the Thomas More of A Man For All Seasons. He is so staunch in his principles that he is prepared to live on his own metabolism even to the extent of his blood getting poisoned. Even if the whole world is ranged against him he is willing to defend his position with undaunted courage. Even the doctor is baffled at Alexander's refusal to yield. The excruciating pain that he suffered when he was stripped and bound head to foot with wet canvas does not deter his resolve. His young son is sent to plead with him to give up his stance. The doctor asks him, "What about your son? He is turning into a delinquent. He's a good boy. He deserves a father" (EGBDF 29). Even his paternal instincts cannot make him swerve from his chosen path. Paul Delaney brings out Alexander's courage as he writes:

Alexander bases his actions, on a firm sense of what is right and wrong rather than what is politically expedient. To lie and say that barbaric treatment had been satisfactory, that the indecent is decent 'helps them to go on being wicked'. (90)
Alexander teaches a lesson to the state. He wages a battle to subvert the institutional power of the state as he makes it taste defeat by undertaking hunger strike. Before his strike the state had not experienced any such defiance from its subjects. The state was so proud that the hunger strike came to it as a rude shock. Referring to the pride of the State, Alexander says, "They have forgotten their mortality. Losing might be their first touch of it for long" (EGBDF 29). Alexander triumphs when he makes the state taste defeat. By creating Alexander with such steadfastness, Stoppard drives home his serious theme. In Alexander, Stoppard epitomises the cause of individual dignity.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH ACTION AND REACTION

The characters behave in a different way in political plays than in parodies. In the parodies, the characters like Albert, George Moore and Henry Carr may rebel but they are just ignored by those in power. But in political plays the characters are not ignored but harassed. The actions of the heroes create a reaction from those in power. The heroes are punished as Alexander is confined to prison by those in power for resisting officially sanctioned directives. This action of the heroes and the reaction of the officials make the play serious, uplifting and absorbing.
SERIOUSNESS THROUGH THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES

It is obvious that Stoppard is fond of the theatrical device, 'play-within-the-play' and uses it in many of his plays. Here he uses it to bring out the serious theme. The device of 'play-within-the-play' is used in the modified form of the orchestra. Since the orchestra occupies an integral part in the drama, the serious theme of the play, namely suppression of freedom is forcefully and powerfully brought out by the orchestra. Orchestra mirrors the dream of perfect order where any discord is considered to be madness. It just calls for conformity to the totalitarian state. No discord in the orchestra is quite symbolic of no dissent to the state. Since the orchestra occupies an integral place in the drama, the musical accompaniment is intrinsic to the interpretation of the play. The role of the orchestra as a play-within-the-play is beautifully brought out by Richard Corballis as he says:

The play-within-the-play has undergone yet another transformation and has emerged as an orchestra-within-the-play. Still the same purpose is served, however: all the characters associated with the orchestra are shown to have attitudes which are mindlessly 'clock work' that they may be deemed insane. (106)
MEDLEY OF MADNESS

The serious theme is sugar coated with music and the comedy of madness. Ivanov's lunacy keeps the audience laughing. Not only Ivanov is mad. Stoppard presents various types of madness. Presenting various types of madness is another theatrical device through which Stoppard wants to establish the comedy and seriousness of the play. In Ivanov, there is somebody who is really mad who busies himself in the world of music by conducting an imaginary orchestra. The genuine lunatic, Ivanov, provides the comic, and Stoppard makes it all the more comic by providing concrete orchestra. Alexander though not mad is considered mad by others. The officials consider him mad for not saying that sane people are not put in the hospital. Being constantly told that he is mad, he also begins to think that he is mad as he says, "Then one day I did something crazy" (EGBDF 24). His son also tells him. "Papa, don't be crazy! Everything can be all right" (EGBDF 37). The school is converted into a place where one is taught conformity. The doctor thinks that Alexander is off his head because he could get his freedom effortlessly by just saying that he is cured. In the state one sees the madness of irrationality. The illogicality or madness of the society is shown since patients are put in the same room because their names are the same. The authorities are abnormal as they carry on repressive
activities. The logic of the doctor is absolutely mad as seen in the following text.

**Doctor** If I tell you you do not have an orchestra it follows that you do not have an orchestra. If you tell me you have an orchestra, it follows that you do not have an orchestra. (EGBDF 21)

How strange is the logic! If the doctor says it follows, and if Ivanov says it does not follow! Stoppard demonstrates effectively the perversion of Russian logic. The orchestra itself is a symbol of conformity and oppression as "the state is compared to an orchestra, the official metaphor designed to justify the violent limitation of freedom for the sake of group harmony" (Saltzman 70). In a totalitarian society, no dissent is brooked and personal opinions are considered as signs of a sick mind. The very fact one raises the banner of revolt, one is stamped as mad and invariably one has to be put in the "mental hospital". There cannot be any dissenting voice in a totalitarian regime. The seriousness is shown in the choice Alexander makes whether to obey his conscience or the orchestrated society. Through the orchestrated society Stoppard portrays the lack of mental freedom in a controlled society. Through the real orchestra it is highlighted that the society is an anonymity having no opinion of its own except the opinion of an orchestrated society. In order to highlight the deranged mental condition of individuals, Ivanov, is made to hear an
imaginary orchestra. Alexander has to shun both the madness of the society and the madness of the individual. So he neither hears the real orchestra nor the imaginary orchestra. The individual madness and collective madness help Stoppard satirise both the society and the individual. While the orchestras are used to bring out laughter, the serious theme is brought out by presenting Alexander as one who has nothing to do with the real or imaginary orchestra. Stoppard invests Alexander with firmness, staunchness and honesty. Even in the dilemma of the head and the heart when he is pitted against his young son, Alexander comes out very nobly. He wants to get his freedom on his own terms. The play is yet another instance where one finds the blend of the serious and the comic. Serious issues like integrity and freedom are championed by Alexander while the comic is represented by Ivanov. Tamie Watters in Christian Science Monitor says, "To create his familiar mix of profound themes bouncing off ludicrous circumstances, Stoppard had only to place a political prisoner Alexander Ivanov into a cell with a triangle player, Ivanov the lunatic, who suffers from the extraordinary delusion that he commands an orchestra" (19).

**DEUS EX MACHINA**

This is a theatrical device through which Stoppard makes the play very comic. After having stressed the nobility of the intellectual and emotional strife, Stoppard
resolves it like "Deus Ex Machina". The problem is solved with ease by asking Alexander if he hears music and Ivanov if a sane person will be put in a mental hospital. This type of resolution makes the play very comic as they gain freedom either because they are ready to conform or because of a chance mistake of the officials. This is not a resolution as, "the freedom thus bestowed on Alexander and Ivanov is a nominal freedom devoid of substance. Ivanov will go on hearing his orchestra and, more important, Alexander will go on campaigning for civil rights and will no doubt find himself back in a mental hospital before long" (Corballis 111).

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH DRAMATIC DEVICE

The title of the play is a dramatic device through which Stoppard highlights the serious theme. It is not easy to decide who is the 'good boy'. In the eyes of the government good boy is one who conforms himself to its directives and expectations. In the emotional struggle between the father and the son, the good boy may be the father who honours his paternal instincts. In the struggle for freedom good boy could be a person who is steadfast in the face of hard ordeals. In containing all these interpretations the title becomes very significant and meaningful. The good boy deserves favour and a twist to it namely the good boy deserves a father makes the title still
more significant. Young Sacha, just nine years old, who has never even seen his mother, is asked to make a momentous decision. He is asked to persuade his father to give up his struggle. Alexander is forced to choose between the son or the principle that he should cherish most. The conflict is poignantly brought out by what Tim Brassel says:

Alexander's dilemma - between principle and instinct, between natural rights of all individuals and the specific rights of his own son - is the fulcrum of the entire play and its success is very largely dependent on the power with which that dilemma is evoked, intellectually and emotionally, for the audience. (186)

WISDOM OF THE CHILD

Among many things in common between Professional Foul and Every Good Boy Deserves Favour, one common dramatic device Stoppard uses is a young son less than 10 years old for striking the chords of emotion. Incidentally Stoppard gives the same name 'Sacha' to both the boys in the two plays. The young sons are shown in opposition to the hard monolithic system which distorts logic. Through this device of young sons which is quite moving, Stoppard wants to show that the political system is unmoved. The serious situation caused by the oppressive state becomes all the more serious because of the presence of these two hapless victims of the political system. The young sons represent the wisdom of the
child to a society steeped in cruelty and oppression.

**DISCORDANT NOTE**

Closely connected with the metaphor of orchestra 'discordant note' is another dramatic device used by Stoppard to bring out the serious theme. The discordant note is not merely confined to the field of music but to other fields as well. Alexander strikes a discordant note as he does not bend his will to the officialdom. The discordant note can be seen in the following text as Doctor's and Alexander's views are in conflict.

**Doctor**  
*Taken as a whole, the sane are out there and the sick are in here. For example, you are here because you have delusions that sane people are put in mental hospitals.*

**Alexander**  
*But I am in mental hospital.* (EGBDF 27)

The reader also sees young Sacha striking a discordant note. He is sitting at the desk with a punctured drum. He sabotages the orchestra by beating violently the snare drum. The exchanges between Sacha and the teacher are unrelated and hence symbolic of discordant notes.

**Sacha**  
*‘A point has position but no dimension’.*

**Teacher**  
*The asylum is for malcontents who don’t know what they’re doing.* (EGBDF 19)

There is the lunatic, Ivanov, striking the discordant note by imaginary orchestra. By the use of discordant notes Stoppard moves from one plane to another, politics to school, school to hospital, hospital to real orchestra, real
orchestra to imaginary orchestra, with facile ease. Alexander, Ivanov, Sacha, the teacher, the real orchestra are seen in quick succession which results in the mingling of the comic and the serious. That is why Michael Billington says, "Stoppard's technique throughout is to destroy the barrier that divides the comic and serious" (113).

**ABSORD AND THE COMIC**

The absurd drama tries to combine the serious themes with a touch of black humour. This play uses the dramatic device of the absurd in combining the comic and the serious. A hopeless world, characteristic of an absurd play, is presented in the hospital and the school. The absurdity of the play is highlighted as Victor Cahn says, "We are presented with an absurd world, or rather two halves of an absurd world: the 'hospital' and the class room. And we have a victim of that world: Alexander" (144-145). The school is absurd as indoctrination goes on. The school teacher is as heartless as the prison officials. She does not exhibit any of the qualities of a woman. She is just a party-line teacher. There is absurdity in the way Alexander has been treated as he says that he has been given an injection of aminazin, sulfazin, triflazin, haloperidol and insulin which caused swellings, cramps, headaches, trembling, fever and the loss of various abilities including the ability to
read, write, sleep, sit, stand and button his trousers. (EGBDF 29)

The absurdity is also brought out through the lack of identity in characters. The two prisoners lack identity as they are given identical names. Many prisoners are referred to just as A, B, C, D. The prison officials do not have any name. The ruse through which the problem is solved at the end is with the help of this identity problem. Stoppard does not give names to these people to show that they are all just cogs in the machinery.

But the absurd nature is couched in the comic. The fanciful and imaginary orchestra at will by Ivanov provides the comic. The logic of the doctor in philology provides the comic. When Sacha believes that Ivanov is the real doctor, there is fun. Thus Stoppard combines the comic and the serious through the absurd elements.

HUMOUR OF THE SITUATION

Stoppard uses another dramatic device namely humour of the situation to combine the comic and the serious. By placing Ivanov and Alexander together, Stoppard exposes the lunacies and brutalities of a political system. The audience is made to perceive the madness that is treated in the play. Stoppard by placing together the sane and the insane shows that one can combine the serious and the comic. Ivanov is symbolic of the state which is goaded by a fixed idea.
Ivanov captures the demonic rationale of a man driven by an idee fix. About situational humour in the play Andrew Kennedy says as follows:

It is serio-comic from the opening scene on. The confusion of roles and planes of action - between Ivanov's insane musical hallucinations and Alexander's state fabricated 'hallucinations' - is situational wit developed with great economy. (471)

The same comedy is replicated in the school and the hospital. If Ivanov uses the triangle for music, Sacha uses triangle for mathematics. The links with the school, prison and orchestra are established as the teacher asks Sacha to copy down many times the definition, "A triangle is a polygon bounded by the fewest possible sides" (EGBDF 20) in much the same way as the state wants Alexander to copy political slogans a million times. The teacher says, "Yes. They make him copy, 'I am a member of an orchestra and we must play together' (EGBDF 20). Thus the school, prison and orchestra are fused together.

HARASSMENT OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Dogg's Hamlet and Cahoot's Macbeth, minor plays by Stoppard also deal with political oppression. When Stoppard visited Prague in 1974, he met Kohout and Pavel Landovsky. Kohout was a playwright and Landovsky was an actor. They were harassed by their government. They were also involved
with Chartists 77. They were not allowed to work in the theatre and banned from acting. Kohout wrote about this sad predicament to Stoppard. Since theatre was their life line, they were ingenious enough in defying the authorities and the restrictive surroundings by starting what is known as living room theatres (LRT). In one such living room theatre they were going to stage Macbeth. Reflecting about these situations Stoppard wrote Cahoot’s Macbeth about which he says, “Cahoot’s Macbeth was inspired by these. However, Cahoot is not Kohout, and this necessarily over-truncated Macbeth is not supposed to be a fair representation of Kohout’s elegant seventy five minute version” (Introduction).

Cahoot’s Macbeth deals with totalitarian harassment of artistic expression. Stoppard’s earlier question whether an artist has to justify himself in political terms comes up again in Cahoot’s Macbeth. The Czech artists in Cahoot’s Macbeth play not only the roles of Shakespeare’s Macbeth but also the roles in real life. They act while their rooms are bugged. The police officer not only warns them but even physically stops them by erecting a wall between the audience and the stage. But the play is through all the same with Dogg’s language.

The play stresses the serious theme that the human
spirit is invincible and that it can overcome any barrier. Their acting is not only an artistic action but also political and moral one. As in other political plays, Stoppard wants to show that suppression of individual freedom is irredeemably wrong. The use of Dogg (different language) is a sign of a social protest showing collective and effective dissent. As in Shakespeare Scotland is shown under the tyranny of Macbeth, Czechoslovakia is shown under the tyrannical grip of the police against which the artists wage their struggle for freedom.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH CHARACTERIZATION

That Stoppard condemns the political system and not the individual can be seen through the portrayal of the inspector. The inspector is the representative of the totalitarian regime and the way Stoppard portrays him is somewhat unconventional. He is portrayed as a very human and kind person when he enquires the hostess about the inconveniences as can be seen in the following passage:

Inspector Don't you find it rather inconvenient, having a lot of preening exhibitionists projecting their voices around the place? (CM 48)

Inspector is shown to be a man who is concerned about the discomfort caused by a crowd of people gathering for the living room theatres. There is the chance of the people getting sick. They could disturb the regular rhythm of life. The lavatory facilities may be far from adequate. They put
up with all these inconveniences just to preserve the right of freedom of expression. The benign characterization of the inspector actually accentuates the noble struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH THEATRICAL DEVICE

The wall metaphor is a brilliant piece of theatrical device. The conflict between the artists of the living room theatre and the government is visibly portrayed through the wall. Commenting on it Felicia Londré says, "Artists under a totalitarian regime are physically walled in, but their thoughts and creative imagination find their own form of expression if necessary, a whole new language" (164).

OPPRESSION AND DOGG

Dogg's Hamlet is a mixture of Stoppard's earlier plays Dogg's our pet and the 15 minute Hamlet, giving Hamlet in a capsule form. This substantially reduced adaptation of Hamlet deals with the failure of communication. Dogg is a language which has sentences with one or two words only without having any metaphor or nuances. The meaning alone is different though it follows English syntax, structure, rhythms and intonations. How the meanings are different can be seen by a few examples of Dogg words:
Dogg

Brick
Cube
Breakfast
Plank
Sun, dock
Haddock Priest

English
Here
Thank you
Testing
Ready
One, two
The mike dead.

The comedy arises because of the confusion and misunderstanding when people who speak normal English and people who speak Dogg are brought together. Easy is a truck driver who knows only English while others speak only Dogg. Dogg is also the name of the headmaster. Easy (may be Stoppard wants to show that it is easy to pick Dogg as it is not learnt but just caught) is there for constructing a stage for the boys to perform shortened Hamlet in English, which is alien to them. Because of the communication gap, there are some violent beatings.

Stoppard uses the linguistic theories of Wittgenstein as a backdrop for the play. In his book Tractatus, Wittgenstein states that analysis of language is the only reliable guide to the discovery of the nature of world. In his later book Philosophical Investigations he reverses what he had said earlier in Tractatus. He states that human language does not give any access to reality, but it is the mind that creates reality. This is akin to the classical debate whether reality exists outside or in the mind. Fascinated by Wittgenstein, Stoppard attempts this play since he believes that the reference of all terms in any
given language can shift fluidly dependent on which set of verbal equation is being held in an ongoing language game within a society. In this play Stoppard uses the language itself as a code to be deciphered. He attempts to teach a new language to the audience as he wants to show that "language is not a calculus logically inferred from the grid-pattern of reality but a form of life, a communal activity capable of change and growth" (Sammells 119). Stoppard wants to show that with facial expressions and the context, language is not a difficult thing to acquire as it is only a question of getting used to the jargon. In fact the police officer, who does not know Dogg, is able to pick up some Dogg as the play closes. The serious thing that Stoppard wants to communicate is that people can understand one another when they have common goals irrespective of language barriers.

THE COMIC AND THE SERIOUS THROUGH HAMLET AND MACBETH

Both plays attempt brief and intense condensations of Shakespeare. The truncated production of Shakespeare is not irreverence to Shakespeare. Stoppard wants to show that modern man does not have time for classics but is ready only for such truncated forms. This approach makes the plays comic. Jack Kroll says, "The joke's not on Shakespeare, but on the modern world's short circuiting of human sensibility that Stoppard takes to its ultimate crazy logic" (110).
Stoppard uses Shakespeare's lines (Macbeth Act IV Scene III 11.32,40,41) to depict the conditions of the present day world as in Cahoot's Macbeth one reads, "Bleed, bleed, poor country! It weeps, it bleeds and each new day a gash is added to her wounds" (69). As Pavel Hollar in Professional Foul expresses the oppressive system of the government where there is no opportunity for the educated youth, Stoppard here points out there is no opportunity for the actors to blossom. The following exchange has the echoes of Professional Foul.

Inspector Who are you Pigface?
'Macbeth' Landovsky.
Inspector The Actor?
'Macbeth' The floor cleaner in a boiler factory. (CM 49)

Stoppard's perceptions of Shakespeare are coloured by present day thinking. He uses Shakespeare as a backdrop to highlight political oppression. Hamlet and Macbeth are shown as examples of political oppression. Claudius and Macbeth are the political oppressors who embody the oppressive structures in the totalitarian states.

SERIOUSNESS AND LANGUAGE

Through these two plays Stoppard shows that language is power. Free speech is a symbol of individual freedom whereas government officials consider free speech as a hindrance to
maintain law and order. There is conflict in the way the individual sees and in the way government sees. Stoppard shows his concern for the individual. The absence of free speech under the guise of maintaining order, is the way by which government officials impose their view. In this context of the fight between totalitarianism and freedom, Stoppard shows how the same language can be a boon or bane as it can function as a tool of oppression or as an instrument of freedom. Stoppard uses three types of languages namely Dogg, Shakespeare’s language and the oppressive language of the state. Through the mixture of these, Stoppard is able to combine the yearning for freedom and the actual oppression.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

From Russian dissidence Stoppard turns his attention to home situation. The play Night And Day is situated in an imaginary land in Africa, called Kambawe an erstwhile colony of England. The opening scene portends the imminent dangers with the helicopter sound, darkness and violent shaking of foliage. There is the noise of the machine gun. Guthrie, a photographer, shouts “Press! Press” (ND 1) as he is shot and knocked over. Though the setting is in Kambawe, the play is about journalism back home in England. The war in the fleet street and the war in Kambawe meet here. With this
background Stoppard is able to bring out an engaging debate on the freedom of the press.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH THE SETTING

Stoppard takes every effort with meticulous care to create a sense of realism. Even though Kambawe is a fictional land, he gives a map with road details to places like Jeddu and Kamba city. Details about Adoma Hills, Kambawe railway and Malakuangazi mining site add to this geographical realism. From the details of the setting, props and furniture one gets cultural realism. From the stage directions the reader knows the following details: The furniture is European with local colour. It looks comfortable and well used. Essentials include a telephone, marble topped table or sideboard with bottles and glasses on it and a large sofa (ND X). The audience hears the noise of the helicopter and a jeep drives onto the stage at the noise of the machine gun. Thus from what the audience hears and sees Stoppard creates a realistic world. Realism or naturalism is a movement in drama which has come into being because of the dissatisfaction with other dramatic moulds like the romantic drama and the melodrama. The modern life with urbanisation and mechanisation gave rise to this type of drama. It is a drama that takes into account the problems of the society. A naturalist play is concerned with human problems. It does not try to escape from reality. So the
naturalist play is connected with the serious issues of human life. Night And Day as a naturalist play deals with the serious issues of the freedom of the press, problems of love and political turmoil. Speaking about naturalist play Emile Zola says, "I am absolutely convinced that we shall next see the Naturalist movement imposed on the theatre and bringing to it the power of reality, the new life of modern art" (as quoted in Billington 123).

OPPOSING POLES

Dick Wagner and Jacob Milne are like opposing poles. Dick Wagner, a journalist, is a staunch union man fighting for the rights of the journalists. He is a professional who is highly jealous of the rise of Milne. Jacob Milne, also a journalist, is a freelancer. He worked for the Grimsby Evening Messenger and kept off from the journalists' strike pressing for salaries on par with the printers. When the strike was called off each journalist had to appeal to the employer to get back his job. If Milne were to appeal and get back his job, there was the danger of another strike as other journalists considered him a black leg and as such did not want him to be taken back. Carson, the mine owner, is so busy with his mine business that he has no time for his wife, Ruth. Actually there are two Ruths, namely Ruth and "Ruth" in inverted commas. The audience is occasionally made privy to Ruth's thoughts and when Ruth's thoughts are
 audible she is called "Ruth" in quotes and treated as a separate character. In all the character portrayals Stoppard brings out the competitive rivalry of the journalistic world. If the play is about genuine freedom of the press, it is also about the lack of it in the lives of the journalists. Each character is given a fair chance of his/her view. It is something like what happens in Travesties when Joyce, Tzara, Lenin and Carr speak. As Stoppard does not take any sides in Travesties, here also each character is given free expression through which the serious problems of the present day world are highlighted.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

Stoppard analyses different issues like wages for the journalist, union, junk journalism, point of view, free press and controlled press. Thus a wide range of issues are raised in the play. The function of the press in guiding the destiny of the world and the role it owes to the people whose affairs it tries to flash are taken up for discussion. Whether running a paper is a business or art is also taken up for discussion. Other matters like the relationship between the employer and employee, the role of the union and the relationship between truth and what is published are discussed. Should the privacy of an individual be respected or not is also dealt with. Stoppard tries to give a fair treatment to each view.
The major difference between Wagner and Milne is their approach to the press industry. Wagner thinks that with the help of the journalists, the owners of papers mint money. While not accepting this view, Milne thinks that the output by some journalists is substandard and they do not deserve to be paid more than the printers. He expresses his view forthrightly in the following passage.

**Milne**

The *Globe* is losing a million a year, and nobody is getting rich on the *Grimsby Messenger* either. It's not a private coal mine sending somebody's son to Eton, it is a limited liability company. (ND 34)

Wagner stands in the opposite camp of Milne and he advocates what is known as 'closed shop' in journalism. Closed shop is a kind of association of journalists to take care of the interests of journalists. The journalists are bound by the official stand of the association as they are not free to air their own views. Milne, is opposed to the idea of closed shop as he is a free lance who stands for free press and free expression. The points of difference between Wagner and Milne can be seen in the dialogue between Ruth and Milne.

**Milne**

Dick wants union membership to be a licence to practice. "This man has been judged fit". Like doctors and lawyers, I suppose.

**Ruth**

Nothing wrong with that. Otherwise you'd have lawyers amputating the wrong leg. Ho, ho-...
Ruth: Mining engineers have the same sort of thing, I believe, professional standards.

Milne: Oh, yes. But nothing could be further from Dick's mind. The fact is nobody's going to be drummed out of the NUJ for illiteracy or getting drunk at the Lord Mayor's dinner. On the contrary it is the union which is going to keep them in their jobs ... (ND 64)

For Milne free expression is an important thing as he says, "No matter how imperfect things are, if you've got a free press every thing is correctable and without it everything is concealable" (ND 64).

Ruth expresses her view of journalism as she complains about the nosy press or junk journalism. She remembers what happened when she got divorced and married Carson who was also a divorcee. At that time she and Carson hit the headlines in the newspapers. Her view is that journalism has no business to pry into the private lives of people as she says:

Ruth: ... Of all the husbands who ran off with somebody's wife that week, Geoffrey qualified because he had a measly title ... .

Wagner: Yeah. I agree with you. Newspapers have got more important things to do. (ND 48-49)

Different points of view are pictured as Wagner and Mageeba are in disagreement in describing what is going on in Kambawe. While Wagner calls it war, Mageeba calls it
devolution problem. Mageeba is very forthright in condemning the opinion creating power of the newspapers, to suit their own ends. He contends that they are not objective and what they publish is not the voice of the people. He expresses his views very strongly in the following passage.

Mageeba  Not exactly a gentleman, no, but a rich Englishman with a title. So there we were, an independent country, and the only English newspaper was still part of the British Empire a family empire - a chain of newspapers - a fleet of newspapers ...

Wagner  Yes, ... you mean like a convoy?

"Ruth"  He means like Fleet Street, you fool. Mageeba : ... a newspaper is not like a mine or a bank, or an airline, it is the voice of the people and the Kambawe paper was the voice of an English millionaire. (ND 94-95)

Mageeba and Wagner also discuss another point namely whether a paper should be completely state controlled or completely free. Mageeba is of the view that both do not suit the needs of his new born nation. What is most needed for his country is a press neither completely controlled nor completely free but rather a relatively free press.

Thus the discussion touches on the various social and political issues. Judy Simons aptly sums up the wide range of the issues the play deals with in the following words:

The arguments about press freedom invite the questioning aspects of social, political and
personal freedom and establish a series of comparisons between professional demands and political manipulation. (85)

Night And Day is concerned not only with the issues of the press but a host of other issues like war, colonial experience, trade unions, governments and marital love. Stoppard combines the comic and the serious as the issues discussed are quite serious but are clothed with wit and humour as Jack Richardson says, “Everything is handled with wit and humour and at the play's end... they are all held together by a very entertaining logic” (73). The freedom of expression is very dear to Stoppard as it is enshrined in plays like Professional Foul, Every Good Boy Deserves Favour. It is innate to him as he himself has been a journalist. He knows about the problems of journalism like giving something sensational, keeping to the dead line, need to use advanced technology and professional rivalry. Through this play Stoppard wants to convey the serious message of press freedom. He told Melvyn Bragg in a television interview: I am passionate about this (press freedom). It is one thing that separates a free society from an unfree one” (as quoted in Brassell 28).

PLAYWRIGHT OF SURPRISE

Stoppard shows that he is a playwright of surprise and agility. The reader does not know what is the stand of
Stoppard with regard to the multi views of 'closed shop', free press, state controlled press and relatively free press. He has revealed about himself that he enjoys looking at issues from various angles. All the different views are his own intellectual arguments as he says:

I don't write plays with heroes who express any point of view. I write argument plays. I tend to write for two people rather than one voice. ... This is also true of 'Night and Day'. There are various things said by various people that I agree with. (Gussow 22)

Expressing his views through all the characters, though the views themselves are conflicting, is typically a Stoppardian characteristic. One cannot pin him down to any one view as he is constantly shifting his stance. It is like his infinite 'leap frog' as he does not subscribe to any one theory of journalism. There is some truth in all the different views expressed. The saying that 'the truth lies in between' may even be incorrect as there are not just two positions. There are several positions of Guthrie, Wagner, Milne, Ruth and Mageeba. What is correct would be that truth lies amidst their views. Through this Stoppard conveys a serious and necessary message of plurality of perception.

JOURNALISM AND POLITICS AGAIN

Another play wherein Stoppard touches on journalism and politics is Dirty Linen. The treatment is very casual and
superficial. It involves the parliamentarians and a young woman called Maddie Gotobed, a very suggestive name. It has been reported by the press that 119 honourable members of the parliament are her customers. So a high level committee is constituted to go into the scandal that has rocked the nation and the parliament through the startling revelations that have been made in the newspapers. Gotobed is appointed secretary to this high level committee more for her charms than her skills. The irony is that the committee members themselves have had an affair with her and most members of the House of Commons have had Maddie Gotobed in common though each one does not know that the other has had an affair with her. The purpose is spelt out as the members want to bring out a statement which will protect their decency and censor the newspapers for junk journalism. Gotobed is of the view that people don't care what the MP's do in their spare time so long as they do their job well as seen in the following text.

Maddie People don't care what M.P.'s do in their spare time, they just want them to do their jobs properly bringing down prices and everything. (DL 35)

THE COMIC THROUGH THE SETTING

The usual confusion of the opening scene in Stoppard's plays is also present here proving to be very comic. Maddie takes a pair of silk, lace trimmed French knickers out of
the bag and puts them on. The other characters also display a similar pair of knickers. This shows their intimacy with this woman. While the M.P.s. browse through the sexy blow ups in the newspapers, Gotobed herself serves as a tabloid blow up for the audience. Besides she keeps stripping herself at regular intervals. All these make the play very comical.

THE COMIC AND THE SERIOUS THROUGH CHARACTERIZATION

Maddie has the most of common sense among all those present. Her interventions are straight forward as she does not beat around the bush. She does not mince words. She is very practical. Her plain speaking sweeps them off their feet. Maddie's answer to the nosy press is to tell them to mind their business. She is far superior to all others and keeps them all in tender hooks. She uses a language that comes straight from the heart. That she is in complete command is seen in the way she addresses others by the first name. French is the only one free from any shady affairs. While what others say is hypocrisy, what French says is quite genuine. He asks for strict probe into this matter and he is quite earnest about finding evidence. Stoppard makes it comic when he depicts that even such a person is not spared by the charms of Maddie. That French is seduced during the interval is known when he pulls out Maddie's knickers from his pocket when he reaches for his kerchief.
The caricature of the M.P.s and the robust common sense of Maddie help Stoppard combine the comic and the serious.

**COMEDY OF THE SITUATION**

McTeazle and Cocklebury-smythe, both committee members are anxious that Maddie Gotobed should say nothing about their acquaintance with her. Both men secretly return to her the knickers they had brought. There is a lot of fun when Withenshaw pulls out a pair of knickers to wipe the blackboard.

**French**

*What is that?*

**Withenshaw**

*Pair of briefs.*

**French**

*What are they doing in there?*

**Withenshaw**

*It's a brief case. (DL 43)*

**COMEDY THROUGH LANGUAGE**

Stoppard has recourse to words with double meaning as seen in the following text.

**Cokeleybury-Smythe**

*So glad that you could come, Chamberlain. You know Miss Gotobed?*

**Chamberlain**

*(Over-reacts) No.*

**Cokeleybury-Smythe**

*Mr. Chamberlain – Miss Gotobed*

**Chamberlain**

*I meant I didn’t know her. (DL 27)*

The sexual overtones of the word 'know' is brought out by the nervousness and over-reactions of Chamberlain. When
there is voting for the amendments of the report, ayes and noes, the chairman spells noes as nose causing lot of fun. When McTeazle asks Maddie, "Do you use Gregg’s or do you favour the pitman method?", she replies, "I am on the pill" (DL 19). In fact she is asked what shorthand she uses as secretary. Maddie, thinking that she is asked about contraceptives, gives the answer. Thus there are plenty of jokes, fun and frolic. Jokes apart, the play also deals with serious issues. The main theme of the play is whether the journalists can invade the privacy of individuals. The committee is of the view that the journalist must be kept at arm’s distance. They have no right to pry into the private lives as long as no law of the land in transgressed.

PARODY OF FARCE

The play is a parody of farce. That the play is farce is evident when knickers keep coming out from desk drawers, when committee members glance at the blow ups in newspapers and when Maddie herself gives such a pose. There is also farce in the disappearing of clothes and hasty cover ups. Though all these provide fun Stoppard does not stop there. He parodies the form of farce itself. In farce, the writer is supposed to enlist the sympathy of the audience whereas Stoppard does not do that. Instead Stoppard mocks or exposes the ridiculousness of his subjects. By this Stoppard makes the play a satire of the foibles, public and private.
Among Stoppard's plays there is nothing much to show about human love. The void is filled up by the play *The Real Thing*. As the play opens the audience sees Max and Charlotte. Charlotte is supposed to have returned from Geneva. Though she has a plastic duty free airport bag to show that she has just returned from Geneva, Max is unable to believe it as he has found her passport lying in the drawer. Hence he knows that she has not been to Geneva while Charlotte pretends that she has been. Added to that their marital life is in deep trouble which is indicated by the collapse of the pyramidical tiered viaduct of cards. So far it is just a scene taken from Henry's *House of Cards*, used here as a play-within-the-play. The action moves on to a real life situation in which Henry is married to Charlotte while Annie is married to Max. Annie is very much interested in social action, public protest and opinion creating. Her idol is Private Brodie who has involved himself in antimissile demonstration ending up with imprisonment for having assaulted the police. As there is problem between Max and Charlotte on the stage, there is also problem in real life between Charlotte and Henry. The real life and stage life coalesce and one throws light on the other. Annie makes amorous advances to Henry, while he is quite circumspect and advises her to wait for opportune moment. They make love to
each other in the car where Henry leaves his Kerchief, proving as an evidence of Annie's infidelity to Max. If stage and life are compared in the beginning, now they are contrasted. In the stage Max is not perturbed very much when he learns that Charlotte has cheated him. Now in real life when he learns that Annie has cheated him, he is unable to retain the same calm and cool.

Later Annie and Henry get married. Even after two years of marriage, there is a discordant note between them. While Henry likes pop music, Annie likes classical music. Henry is unable to understand Annie's interest in Brodie. While she is very much interested in Brodie's play written in jail, Henry is not at all interested in the play. Instead he finds fault with the play when Annie requests him to prune it and shape it.

Annie is supposed to play a role in a play called 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. As she sets out she is followed by Billy, another actor. Because of rehearsing for the play, they end up being attracted to each other.

Henry meets his former wife Charlotte and in the conversation learns lot of new things, specially about what love is.
CREDIBLE CHARACTERS

Stoppard has achieved something remarkable in characterization. He has created convincing and credible characters. He has put to rest the criticism that he lacks social conscience. Annie is created as a convincing woman. Henry is getting educated or rather reeducated as he is gradually changed. He learns that love does not mean annihilation of the other person but means mutual affection and respect as he learns from his daughter that "exclusive rights isn't love, it is colonization" (RT 63). It is a process which involves both pain and joy. He considers his different roles as a lover, husband, father and writer. Charlotte is right in expecting him renounce the romantic world and come down to brass tacks. He must be ready to incarnate himself in the actual world. As Albert seeks refuge in the bridge, Henry seeks refuge in his art which makes him insensitive as in the case of Albert. The change in him leads him to yield to the demand of Annie as he agrees to rewrite Brodie's play. Speaking about love Henry says, "It's no trick loving somebody at their best. Love is loving them at their worst" (RT 66). Thus there is a glorious transformation in Henry as he travels a long way from being a conceited and moody man to become a man capable of accommodating and understanding others.
SERIOUSNESS THROUGH THEATRICAL DEVICE

Stoppard makes the play very convincing by making life reflect stage, stage reflecting life, life altering stage and stage altering life. Max and Charlotte on the stage reflect the actual life of Henry and Charlotte. Max who has self control on the stage gives place to anger, accusation, insults and broken sentences, showing that stage and life are dissimilar. In what happens to Annie and Billie, one sees stage altering life. What starts as rehearsal, kissing and embracing, alters real life as they marry each other. So Katherine Kelly is right in stating that, "The Real Thing attempts with great delicacy to create the impression of life like art and art like life' (180). Through this theatrical device Stoppard is able to explore the real thing, namely love. Stoppard wants to bring out the difference between the real and the unreal. He contrasts real love and false protestations. The conclusion of the play raises a serious ethical question whether end justifies means. At the end Henry and Annie get reconciled. The means for the reconciliation is unfaithfulness. If Henry has been unfaithful, Annie has been equally so by changing her lovers at quick succession. They have been walking through infidelity and betrayal. When there is so much infidelity, the ethical question raised is whether there can be any commitment.
BORROWING AND FUN

Stoppard borrows freely from other plays to heighten the sense of the comic. Strindberg's Miss Julie, Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, Henry's House of Cards and Chekov's Three Sisters are all plays-within-the-play. They are used to juxtapose real life and stage life. Through this borrowing the play becomes more comic.

A PLAY ON ESPIONAGE

In 1968 itself Stoppard has come up with a television play called Neutral Ground, the background of which is his homeland Czechoslovakia and the problems connected with spying. Stoppard uses Sophocles' Philoctetes as a peg to hang his plot. In 1988 he has come up with a full length play Hapgood which also deals with espionage and counter espionage, private emotions and national interests, loneliness and emotional deprivation. Stoppard's radio play The Dog it was that Died (1982) is also a forerunner to Hapgood. The Dog gives arguments to show that one may consider the death of Purvis as an accident or murder. Similar problems of arriving at reality and truth are dealt with in Hapgood.

BACK TO THE COMIC PROWESS

In the new phase of political plays, it may look as if the comic self of Stoppard is almost dead. But in Hapgood, his comic prowess comes to life once again. Here Stoppard
turns his attention to the countries in the East and the
West connected with the Soviet and Western Intelligence. The
play is about spying and all the intricacies that go with
it. Elizabeth Hapgood is the head of the British
intelligence unit. Here again the opening scene is confusing
since there are lot of mysterious actions and characters.
Some people come and leave briefcases while using switching
of towels on the door as some sort of communication. The
purpose of the opening scene is to arrest the attention of
the audience.

Then the action shifts to the zoo as pointed out in the
stage directions: perhaps we are looking at Blair and Kerner
through the bars of a case (H 9). Kerner, a Russian born
scientist, was sent to England as a spy but now he is acting
as a double agent working for England and Russia. On account
of this both sides have lost faith in him as he is
questioned by Blair, "Joseph-I want to know if you’re ours
or theirs, that is all" (H 11). Blair asks this because some
important secrets about strategic defence have been passed
on to Moscow.

It is known that Kerner is the father of Joe through
Hapgood though he refuses to marry Hapgood. After the
soviet have been prevented from getting vital information
from Kerner it appears as if they have kidnapped Joe. Even
though Hapgood told Blair that her son should not be physically involved in the strategy he ruthless as he is, does not heed any attention to her request. Hapgood is angry with Blair for having exposed her son's life to danger. She feels frustrated and wants to quit her job and spend her time in bringing her son up.

COMBINATION OF THE COMIC AND THE SERIOUS IN HAPGOOD

Hapgood stands out and shines as a fine character. She is modelled after a historical person namely Isabel Florence Hapgood, an extraordinary linguist. She is a very significant woman character whom Stoppard endows with fine qualities. She is sharp, intelligent, keen and earnest. She has the love of a mother and longs for love. She would like to marry Kerner. In general, she is fair in all her dealings. The reader is also puzzled by her. Her consummate acting with regard to her son's alleged kidnapping calls into question whether her maternal instincts are true. She uses her physical charms as a bait to hook Ridley. One can say that she is only halfgood. In Hapgood one sees the fine qualities on the one hand and detestable qualities on the other. In so far as she is genuine she comes across to the reader as a serious and dependable person and in her frivolity she comes across as a comic character.
HUMAN BEHAVIOUR AND QUANTUM MECHANICS

In Professional Foul Stoppard used 'Catastrophe Theory' from mathematics to explain sudden change in human behaviour. In this play he uses quantum mechanics to drive home his theory about human behaviour. Quantum Theory is alluded to when Blair and Kerner meet in the zoo. Blair tells him that he has fallen out of favour with the British and the Russians. He asks him whether he is a triple agent. In that context Kerner uses quantum mechanics theory of how light travels for his answer as seen below:

Blair       One lives to know what's what.
Kerner      Oh Yes! Objective reality.
Blair       I thought you chaps believed in that.
Kerner      'You chaps'? Oh, Scientists. 'You chaps!' Paul, objective reality is for zoologists. 'Ah yes, definitely a giraffe'. But double agent is more like a trick of the light. (H 10)

According to Quantum Theory, light travels in waves as well as particles. Only in observation one can find out whether light travels as waves or as particles. As it is difficult to be certain about the identity of electron, it is difficult to predict how a human being will act. Kerner is a triple agent as he serves the British, Russians officially and unofficially. Hapgood pretends to be twins besides Russian twins and Ridley twins. All these go to emphasize
how difficult it is to arrive at certainty. As it is difficult to say whether light travels as wave or particle, it is difficult to ascertain the behaviour of human persons. Even people who are certain that they are in the same side are cheated. Hapgood is very loyal to Blair, but she is betrayed as Blair uses her son in his strategy without her knowledge. Through the use of Quantum Mechanics, Stoppard wants to show that human beings are highly unpredictable. The main burden of this play is uncertainty as there is no firm ground. One cannot hold on to anything as everything is shifting. Senses cannot be believed and emotions cannot be trusted. What is real and what is play-acting is not clear. That is why Toby Zinman says, "The insoluble problem of the twin nature of light as both waves and particles, lurks behind all the now-you-see-it-now-you don’ts of the play" (318). Through this scientific theory Stoppard has been able to probe the depth of human behaviour which adds to the seriousness of the play.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH THEATRICAL DEVICES

Semidarkness is a theatrical device through which Stoppard reinforces the theme of the play. There is not sufficient light to see what is what, and knowing what is what, is the central theme of the play. The cage with bars is another theatrical device which is indicative of the
circumscribed freedom of those engaged in intelligence activities. The stage direction that there is light and shadow is symbolic of man's capacity or otherwise to arrive at truth. Light signifies truth while shadow signifies the hurdles towards truth. In the opening scene the audience hears only the voice without seeing the person. This theatrical device also goes to intensify the element of mystery.

SERIOUSNESS THROUGH DRAMATIC DEVICES

There are different pairs in the play. Hapgood is a twin, Ridley is a twin, Russian is a twin and Kerner is more than a twin. The British and the Russians are on the either side. There is twinning in names also as in Joseph Kerner and his son, Joe, a short form of Joseph and also common a moral by which a spy is referred to. There is duality in Hapgood as she is only halfgood. Stoppard uses this twinning as a dramatic metaphor for the modern society. The serious quest of knowledge or epistemology is presented in comical terms. Stoppard wants to express the serious view that there are multiple selves in the spectator as there cannot be any single absolute morality or straight causality which is shown by the dramatic device of twinning.
GAME PLAYING

Game playing is another dramatic device used to heighten the elements of the serious. The whole play is structured on game playing. When Ridley comes under suspicion, Hapgood warns him in terms of game as shown in the following text.

You are not safe, Ridley, You're cocky and I like prudence, you're street smart and this is a boardgame. (H 44)

Hapgood implies that Ridley is unsuited and illequipped to the discipline of espionage. Espionage is risky since it is like playing chess without a board against an absent opponent. Espionage is like a card game in which the players do not know what game it is until somebody says that he has won. There is also the rugby game in which Hapgood's son Joe, plays. The opening scene is like a double-level shell game a game in which spectators are challenged to bet on the location of a small object concealed under shells - because of switching both the cubicles and identical briefcases. It can also be seen as a version of musical chairs. All these show that there is game metaphor.

Frequently enough in Stoppard's plays, the marginal and the fringe become the major and gain central focus. The frame turns out to be the central. Similarly here game which
is of marginal importance becomes the central image to understand the play. The game metaphor provides the key for the interpretation of the play. Game metaphor which is something very insignificant becomes the most significant. The game metaphor shows that one person can be two characters or vice versa. Through the game Stoppard is able to explain the complexity of human behaviour as Christopher Innes says, "In the theatrical context only what is unreal is true, and game-playing is the most significant activity" (315).

CONCLUSION

Owing to historical events there is a change in Stoppard's approach to his play-writing in the third phase. He burns with righteous anger and his role as a playwright is geared towards condemning any trace of oppression whatever be the field. Though this phase focuses its attention on politics, there are other spheres of human activity like journalism, love and espionage to which Stoppard devotes considerable attention. In all these Stoppard upholds freedom of the individual.

The characterization of Anderson and Alexander is a sterling example to show how high Stoppard thinks of human nature. In spite of the fact that a human being is very often a product of the circumstances, Stoppard propounds the
theory that human nature is invincible. It has the capacity to fight against all odds and if needed it can even break any rule, create even a new language to be successful. It is this theory of human nature that makes his plays quite serious. About Dogg's Hamlet and Cahoot's Macbeth, Jack Kroll says, "the incorrigibly playful Stoppard has never been more serious than in this most playful of his works" (110).

The elements of the serious are heightened with the use of theories like catastrophe and quantum mechanics. He uses a number of theatrical and dramatic devices to highlight the serious with telling effect. Theatrical devices like philosophic structure, play-within-the-play, medley of madness, Deus Ex Machina, orchestra and absurd elements are adeptly used to bring out powerfully the elements of the serious. Similarly dramatic devices like layered metaphor, word games, puns, situational humour and language games show Stoppard's mastery in executing well knit plays underscoring the serious themes. It is easy to notice that Stoppard is able to combine the comic along with the serious on several occasions though the elements of the serious dominate in his third and last phase.