Chapter I: Introduction.

Thomas Straussler (Stoppard) one of the most prominent British writers was born in Zlin, Czechoslovakia on 3rd July 1939. According to Nazi racial laws there was ‘Jewish Blood’ in the family. His father was transferred to Singapore in 1939, taking his family with him. When the Japanese invaded that city in 1942, the women and children were taken to India. Dr. Straussler stayed behind and was killed. Thomas attended an American boarding school in Darjeeling. In 1945 his mother married Kenneth Stoppard, a British Army Major, and both of her sons took his name. They then went to England, where Stoppard’s step father worked in a machine tool industry. Thomas Stoppard continued his education at a preparatory school in Yorkshire.

At the age of 17, he felt he had had enough schooling and became first a reporter and then a critic for the Western Daily Press of Bristol from 1958 to 1960. Stoppard then worked as a freelance reporter from 1960 to 1963. During these years he experimented with writing short stories and plays. In 1962 he moved to London in order to be closer to the center of the publishing and theatrical works in the United Kingdom. He was appointed C.B.E. (Commander of the British Empire) in 1978, and Knighted in 1997.

Tom Stoppard’s works can be divided into two broad categories, works for theater and works for radio, film and television. Stoppard has written 22 theater plays, 7 radio plays, 10 television plays, 11 adaptations, 6 screenplays and a novel.


Stoppard like Pinter has evolved from the modernist tradition of English drama after Samuel Beckett. Both Stoppard and Pinter have gone beyond Beckett in their characterization and style. With Peter Shaffer and Edward Bond, Tom Stoppard forms a circle dominating the National Theater in Britain; however, unlike them and unlike the new social realists, mostly his esteemed near-contemporaries such as Behan, Delaney, Livings, Arden, McGrath, Osborne and Wesker, Stoppard shows his affinities with Beckett and Pinter for the kinds of metaphysical questions explored intellectually in his plays above social issues. Sometimes, Eliot’s ‘Prufrock’ seems more to characterize his own intellectual inclinations, in the sense that Prufrock lives absurdity of life and intellectual uncertainties in transcending lurking incompatibilities between individual ability and social complexity, knowledge and reality, logic and chance. Such incompatibilities form the central
dramatic interest, which Stoppard engages with powers of wit and imagination at his command.

In his major plays Stoppard emerges as an intellectual and entertaining parodist. Parody has a seminal place in Stoppard’s dramatic art and theatrical performance, to say the least. Moreover, an energetic sense of play (playfulness) is insistent in Stoppard the parodist. The kind of parody Stoppard sensitively apprehends may be underlined as postmodern. According to Cuddon, parody means “the imitative use of words, style, attitude, tone and ideas of an author in such a way as to make them ridiculous”. The origins of parody seem to be very ancient. Hegemon was supposed to have been “the first man to introduce parody in the theater, in the 5th Century B.C.” Aristotle has referred to it in *Poetics*, and attributed “its invention to Hegemon of Thasos who used an epic style to represent men as being inferior to what they are in real life.”

Commenting on Quintilian’s (c.35AD – after 96 AD) conception of parody derived from ‘songs sung in imitation of others’ (reminiscent of Homeric *parodoi* versus rhapsodists), Householder suggests, the basic sense of parody would designate “singing in imitation, singing with a slight change [e.g., of subject-matter]”

Rose notes that Aristophanes’ *Frogs* has “the ironic doubling of Hercules in the imitation made of him by Dionysos, who then confronts a stage Hercules face to face as in a distorting mirror so that the audience can compare – and laugh over – images of both model and parodic distortion together.” The word parody has been first used by Ben Jonson in his play *Every Man in His Humour* in 1598: “A Parodie, a parodie! To make it absurder than it was.” John Dryden in 1693 explained parody
as a word commonly used for recreation. In the contemporary world parody may mean a work of mockery for the means of humorous imitation.

Parody has been elevated as one of the most delegated artistic device, one of the agents of artistic creation and innovation. Greek writers have labeled parody as elements of a work reused but not necessarily ridiculed. In a broader sense there may be inclinations towards the use of other intentions other than ridicule. In the Eighteenth Century Pope and Dryden used the dominant mode of satire to ridicule social realities. The 20th Century parody uses parody as a weapon to target something else not only the parodied text alone. The artists of the postmodernist period move towards recontextualizing, connecting the past while registering differences brought by modernity.

Parody can in a wider sense be perceived as an imitation much like plagiarism, this comes into our thoughts as soon as the word parody rings in our ears. In the literary world it is very different to what the dictionary word ‘parody’ implies. Artists or performers paint or perform their acts with relation to their predecessors, a painter makes a master piece with what he has already acquired through vision which could be from the past events or from what he has already perceived from the painters that he admires this would be the same with performers on stage or offstage or in any case with anybody. Parody in the other sense would not be imitating each and everything, rather it holds towards the implications that the artist has his own way of molding and relating the original works of his predecessors. Parody can be usually achieved by the overemphasis of certain traits, using more or less the same technique as that of the cartoon caricaturist; in fact, it is
a kind of satirical mimicry. To Margaret Rose in her *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern* (1993) the ambivalent nature of parody’s politics has a strong appeal, whose nature as subversive or counter-subversive cannot be fixed in abstraction without its contextual applications. She finds parody not as essentially agnostic or benign but both critical of and sympathetic to its targets, texts, and contexts. The parodist in the partial imitation or evocation of another work reworks in a newly disjunctive, comic manner, which would establish “the ambivalence of the parodist’s attitude to the object of criticism in the structure of the parody text. Unlike satire, the parody makes the ‘victim’, or object of its attack a part of its own structure.”

Thus, the specific technique of parody engages “refunctioning a quoted text.” Considering “the unique multiplicity of codes” used in parody, Rose explains:

> […] the ability of the parodist [is] to be not only both satiric and ironic, but, in instances, to combine both the ‘engaged’ and imaginative literature in the one work. In its most sophisticated form, the parody, moreover, is both synthetic and analytic and diachronic and synchronic in its analysis of the work it quotes, in that it is able to evoke a past work and its reception and link it with other analyses and audiences.

Margaret Rose comes to note that since the 1970s, postmodern parody by returning from the late-modern parody, i.e., from either comic or metafictional style, moves to encompass “in a positive manner both humor and metafictional complexity.” Postmodern parody has shifted from its mode as “critique” to that as “innovation”, in other words, has become more “complex” because of its intertextual potential. Some of these insights are useful to reflect some of the characteristics of Stoppard’s
intellectual parodies. In *Parody / Metafiction*, she has viewed another essential characteristic, i.e., self-parody and observed:

> The problems of self-reference in metafiction ... have shown metafictional parody to imply criticism of itself, and a form of ‘self-parody’ in parodying other fictions.”

The self-reflexive insight into metafiction holds equally relevant to intertextual plays of Stoppard.

As a branch of satire, the purpose of parody may be corrective as well as derisive. Linda Hutcheon’s idea comes helpful in clarifying the term parody. In *A Theory of Parody (1984)*, she says, “Parody is repetition, but repetition that includes difference. It is imitation with critical ironic distance, whose irony can cut both ways.” She feels that parody despite being an imitative art is difficult to accomplish well. The author has to maintain a subtle balance between close affinity to the original text and the deliberate contortion of its principal characteristics. It is, therefore, this form of literary art, which is likely to be successful only in the hands of creative writers and master craftsmen. Further she holds, “Overtly imitating art more than life, parody self-consciously and self-critically points us to its own nature.” Poirier too comments on the similar line, “(self-parody) ...calls into question not any particular literary structure so much as the enterprise, the activity itself of creating any literary form.”

Parody would mean, as Linda Hutcheon says, “a formal or structural relation between two texts.” Literature has its own relations, whether it be a work of art or rather an event. She goes on to say:
Texts do not generate anything – until they are perceived and interpreted. For instance, without the implied existence of a reader, written texts remain collections of black marks on white pages. Modern art, especially metafiction, has been very aware of this basic fact of aesthetic actualization.\textsuperscript{14}

Parody makes for an entire discourse of a text, it has to do with the perspectives of the writer, the reader and the interrelations between the two and the text. Towards this postmodernist view Linda Hutcheon further observes:

The framework in which my definition of parody does situate itself, unavoidably, is that of the forms of textual imitation and appropriation…But imitation in such contexts often meant pastiche or parody…However, it seems to me that parody does seek differentiation in its relationship to its model; pastiche operates more by similarity and correspondence.\textsuperscript{15}

Theodor Verweyen has categorized parody into two types, “those that define it in terms of its comic nature and those that prefer to stress its critical function. What is common to both views, however, is the concept of ridicule.”\textsuperscript{16} Shakespeare is well known for his well-made Romantic Comedies and Sheridan for his sentimental dramas. George Bernard Shaw has been the acclaimed master of the comedies of ideas. Shaw in \textit{Major Barbara} has in fact developed a definite debate; “that art, culture, society and religion must gapple with and control the brutal realities of the world, or be controlled by them.”\textsuperscript{17} Unlike Shaw, Stoppard does not press on developing on a narrative line into a message, but at the same time he does
suggest the ideas are not unimportant. While Stoppard is intensely concerned with the comedy of ideas especially in *Travesties*; he shows carefully that the ideas scarcely progress, signifying thereby that in real life we have got nowhere. Shaw in well-made comedies, he does not believe in the rhetorical process of argument to win a hearing; on the other hand, he has the artistic sense to present the ideas through his own outstanding gift of jugglery for theatrical surprise. Stoppard’s intertextuality has been artistic in the sense that it brings forth the inter relation between texts like *Hamlet* and *Waiting for Godot* in his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Michael W. Cadden talks about Stoppard and his use of intertextuality:

> Stoppard’s comic juxtaposition of styles of theater, writing, thinking, speaking and living has made him one of the most beloved and most challenging of contemporary playwrights. This course will explore one aspect of his plays: the ways in which he draws attention to the work of other writers and artists in his own work. Well before the advent of mashup culture, Stoppard married *Hamlet, Waiting for Godot* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* to give birth to *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. This ongoing dramaturgical methodology raises important questions about originality, canonicity, identity, and accessibility.¹⁸

James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922) records experiments with “language and parody”, imitating and sometimes “mocking different styles of writing.”¹⁹ For instance, Stoppard has postulated a neologism known as ‘Dogg’, in *Dogg’s Hamlet*
(1980), where words are in English with an entirely unrelated meaning, which has some bearing on parody. This makes it evident that language to Stoppard is an aspect of human life, it happens to be one he enjoys and for which he has a flair, but he warns us against over estimation and the flaunting of it which he offers as only part of his humane or comic statement.

Tom Stoppard has been considered as a reputed writer of “serious comedy” and his plays as “plays of ideas that deal with philosophical issues.” But as Jane Montgomery has noted, “to his detractors, his plays are devoid of feeling and sensibility: improbably shallow people saying improbably deep things in an emotionally sterile context.”

Critical attention on Stoppard’s plays ranging from their alleged shallowness, on the one hand, has already made the playwright a site of vigorous critical contestations. One of the reasons for contradictory perceptions of the Stoppardian art may be that Stoppard remains a persistent interrogator of the absolutes and stereotypes of humanity, and that too with a parodic strain. Amy Reiter’s observation sounds useful as she states:

whether on stage, screen or simply page, Stoppard questions everything from the nature of love to the nature of the universe, from the compulsion to act out, from the impulse to create to the impulse to procreate.

However, among Stoppard’s critics John McGarth argues from an ideologically class conscious viewpoint, and states that Tom Stoppard’s success lies in “his specious ability to mildly stir the intellect of the middle classes”. The critic
further notes that “a Stoppard show” does not help “the audience think they are being intellectual listening to this vapid sixth-form philosophy, or rather references to philosophy, not even philosophizing.” In the socio-political context, it is important to remember what Stoppard once said: “I am a man of no convictions…I haven’t even got the courage of my lack of convictions.” The study proposes to consider whether parody is used as a strategy by the dramatist to explore this “courage of no convictions”, in the sense of his lack of commitment to social programmes. Nonetheless, there is no dearth of the dramatist’s supporters countering the above criticism with equal vigor by drawing on the meaningful issues and real philosophical questions immanent in the Stoppard plays. Man’s confrontation with his world is a recurring theme in Stoppard’s plays, says June Schlueter:

Whether rendered in the form of two minor characters from a Shakespearean play assuming heroic status (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead), a professor of moral philosophy discoursing on God while his ex-showgirl wife plays surrealist games (Jumpers), or a pseudo historical meeting in Zurich library of three radically different revolutionaries (Travesties), The theme of man’s relationship to reality—his insignificance, exile, and search for self—is manifest.

In addition, Stoppard has increasingly evidenced his creative and sympathetic inclinations towards the postmodern concepts of intertextuality, subjectivity, and parodic perceptions of the world and art around him. Stoppard’s play critiques Wilde’s aesthetics of the autonomy of art for art’s sake in his play Travesties. Stoppard modifies and extends Wilde’s The Importance of Being Earnest
by paradoxically hinting at the implication that art also functions as a corrective to society since art cannot be divorced from life that easily; the boundaries between life and art are not as clear as we imagine them to be. Though not in Lenin and Tzara’s sense, but art might have some revolutionary effects. Stoppard then induces the theme of death in a different perspective in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* a parody of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. He makes use of the minor characters of Shakespeare and portrays death as something that can be enacted, whether it be a physical or a psychological death, bringing to the notion of the audience the reality of life. Death in all its rationality swerves towards the inclination that one cannot experience death to actually play dead, it needs skill, understanding, feeling, emotion, precision towards death, only then can a person play dead. Stoppard’s *The Real Inspector Hound* again parodies Agatha Cristie’s *Mousetrap*, a play about murder mystery in a whodunit style. The two critics Birdboot and Moon in *The Real Inspector Hound* are watching a play giving their own personal reviews related to their obsessions and desires interwoven into their bombastic and pompous reviews. The title is a reference to the ending of *The Mousetrap*, a play guarding the secrecy of its twisted ending. The producers of Agatha Christie’s play could not publicly object without drawing even more attention to the fact that the conclusion gives us more like Stoppard’s *The Real Inspector Hound*, where forth he examines the ideas of fate and free will, and exploring the themes of the ‘play within a play’. *The Real Inspector Hound*, has been created on the realms of a looking glass comedy of great suspense and intrigue about two drama critics. *After Magritte*, is a surrealist comedy in detective form, a husband and wife argue whether the figure they saw in the street was a one-legged football player with the ball under his arm, or a man in pajamas
with a tortoise under his arm. The play shows that Stoppard is as amusing and clever as always.

Stoppard’s themes are generally of an intellectual, philosophical nature; his plays, while having dramatic merit, are also vehicles for the exploration of such themes as the relationship between chaos and order, or free will and determinism. In Enter a Free Man George Riley, committed to a social group lives with his wife and a daughter. He has not opted out of society, but later he opts out of paid employment and finds that the issue of an individual’s responsibility to others is more immediate and concrete. Riley takes upon himself an active role, that of inventor. In fact Riley is a failure, both as the head of a family and as an inventor, and it is this fact that creates the tension of the play, because it forces us to consider that his actions might be justified in principle even if they fail in practice. The positive side of George Riley is his independent creative spirit. He stands for the freedom of the individual to use his own mind and follow his own principles. “I was given a mind and I use it. I don’t go through life as if it was a public escalator with nothing to do but watch the swimsuits go by.” He finds the ordinary routines of life meaningless and pointless, and he has the courage to follow his creative promptings in spite of the ridicule and indifference of those around him. “A man must resist. A man must stand apart, make a clean break on his own two feet. Faith is the key - faith in oneself.” Liberal individualism represented by Riley has been ironically discredited and parodied.

Stoppard can be called a realist of the kind that most of his works portray life as it is reality in all its harsh, comic, ironic, pathetic forms without making it appear classically tragic. He thus reflects on death as an event in the journey of life,
and it needs to be trivialized expressing that there is a possibility towards living life anew and afresh. He would caricature the Romantic ideals, even while representing social phenomena of the middle or lower-middle class life. Stoppard’s theater would well critique the literary realism which in the words of Donna Campbell indicates faithful mirroring of life primarily.

Broadly defined as “the faithful representation of reality” or “verisimilitude,” realism is a literary technique practiced by many schools of writing. Although strictly speaking, realism is a technique, it also denotes a particular kind of subject matter, especially the representation of middle-class life. A reaction against romanticism, an interest in scientific method, the systematizing of the study of documentary history, and the influence of rational philosophy all affected the rise of realism.\(^7\)

Stoppard’s plays are filled with soft obscenities, scattered humor, visible puns and everyday objects. In *Jumpers* and *Enter a Free Man*, Stoppard portrays life to a realist point of view in a world of shifting morals. Marriage is no more a sacred institution, but seems to be a kind of convention which needs perfection psychologically. George Riley and George Moore are never identified by the people around them. They are being treated as just another living person dealing with a confused life. This might be the reason why Stoppard gives them a very popular or common name ‘George’ representing life as a whole. Stoppard travesties them as liberal illusionists, represented as misfits in family and in society in the realms of political and economic terms, despite having high philosophic ideals and feelings.
about the world around them trying to make every possible way to make their surroundings a better place to live in but all in vain. Their pathetic situations would remind of Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, whose Willy Loman on the other hand has tragic proportions.

In *Travesties*, Stoppard induces the possibility of interrelation between the revolutionist Lenin, Dadaist Tzara and philosopher Joyce in a much comic way mocking the ideas and norms of the 1920’s Europe after the World War I. Stoppard portrays the artistic and literary movement of Dada in Europe after World War I. The Dadaist movement emerged after the war, many artists, intellectuals and writers, especially those from France and Germany, moved to Switzerland, which was a neutral country. These artists, Instead of being relieved were not happy with the modern society. They showed their protest through artistic medium and decided to create art which had no meaning. On the contrary, Stoppard induces the artistic medium of the Dadaist movement but in a different perspective, he employs a certain way of producing art with puns and humour but his plays brilliantly portray the philosophical side of him as a writer in a serious but comic way. The Dadaists including Marcel Duchamp and his outrageous painting and his sculptural obscenities were repulsive towards the prevailing public morality and social conventions. This art movement was a protest, but at the same time it managed to be enjoyable and amusing. It was sarcastic, colorful, quirky and silly, and appeared as protest against self-complacent Victorian realism. In turn, Stoppard in his *Travesties* intellectually parodied the Dadaist self-assurances as well as self-contradictory Marxism. For example when Lenin discloses his dislike for the proletariat as lacking improvement:
The freedom of the bourgeois writer, artist or actor is simply disguised dependence on the money-bag, on corruption, on prostitution. Socialist literature and art will be free because of idea of socialism and sympathy with the working people, instead of greed and careerism, will bring ever new forces to its ranks. It will be free because it will serve not some satiated heroine, not the bored upper ten thousand suffering from fatty degeneration, but the millions and ten millions of working people, the flower of the country, its strength and its future.  

The given situation invites Stoppard’s satire.

First and foremost, Tom Stoppard’s intention is always to entertain. Though his plays are intellectually and philosophically rigorous, they are also good episodes told with voluble wit. Sometimes he takes too easy a road to difficult issues in science and history. His plays reach far out in different directions and spread all over relating one work with the other in one way or two. Examining the works of Stoppard in the postmodern era, Freud’s Psychoanalysis has been very much presented in his plays, especially in *Jumpers* (1972), with the Id-Ego-Superego taking action in the relationship between George Moore-Dotty-Archie. Dotty who is much younger than George seems to be the psychologically unfit wife for the highly academic and philosophical husband George Moore. She in her unconscious mind seeks for someone who would pay attention to her beauty, be proud of her, and enjoy life, which she finds in Archie a psychiatrist friend who seems to understand Dotty and pays attention to her needs and feelings. George
Moore does not seem to read the thoughts and feelings of his wife who is bound to the table and chair in their room, not interested about what is happening around him. The unconscious does not just express itself automatically in Dotty; she can only be uncovered through the analysis of resistance and transference in the psychoanalytic process, which has been shown in the play by Stoppard. Much of the irony and parody is traced to their conversation with George Moore. In *Jumpers* Stoppard takes on the ideas that infinitely meet in conflict. The theater presents a moral philosopher, George Moore, wrestling in his study with lecture on God and to combat with Archie and Dotty’s ideas, while in the outer world, an academic gymnast is murdered. The playwright exposes astronauts busy scrapping on the moon, when Britain suffers an authoritarian Radical-Liberal government’s dehumanization. He reveals a deep commitment to morality and a coherent rejection of relativism, i.e. logical positivism as a sterile linguistic philosophy practiced by Archie. *Jumpers* is a play on apparent lines of the Shavian debates. But behind it, continues a serious idea concerning the question of whether moral values are actually social constructs or derive purely from an absolute divinity. Stoppard seems to give no definite answer, since George Moore’s whole-hearted logic for a fixed point, in the sense of God as the beginning, has been deconstructed and playfully parodied.

*Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (1978) deals with the problems affecting sane dissidents in Soviet mad regimes, and *Professional Foul* (1978) with political persecution and institutional evil. Stoppard has the ability to treat moral and political issues with confidence and clarity in *Professional Foul* (1978) which was written for television. Its protagonist, a Cambridge Professor, who visits
Prague to deliver a lecture on ‘Ethical Fictions as Ethical Foundations’ comes only to realize the real messy world of political persecution and learning, and how a clear distinction works between right and wrong. The early perception of Stoppard as an apolitical, detached and moral artist would receive counter reactions on the basis of these plays. Nevertheless, his serious use of satire and irony is not relaxed in the plays.

Stoppard treats two kinds of knowledge in *Arcadia* (1993): the knowledge of love and academic knowledge. These two types of knowledge are in constant conflict throughout the text. It is only the proposition of marriage, the intellectual justification for sex, which allows a resolution between the two forces. The theme of love versus intellect is touched upon in the first pages of the play. Sex remains the final mystery of *Arcadia*. Septimus, in the conclusion of the play, reveals the final sadness and emptiness of an academic life: “When we have found all the mysteries and lost all the meaning, we will be alone, on an empty shore.” Septimus implies that the mysteries of mathematics will someday be solved. As if knowing his own fate, Septimus embraces and kisses Thomasina in earnest, finally indulging in the mystery of his attraction and love. Sex persists as the anti-academic driving force in *Arcadia*. Academic knowledge is never separated far from carnal knowledge—academic knowledge somehow equating sexual prowess. For example, when Bernard makes his great discovery he immediately propositions Hannah, indicating how academic knowledge gives Bernard sexual confidence. Sex is also equated with heat, making it the eventual objective and need of all humans. The relationship between Thomasina’s theory of heat exchange and sex is clearly articulated by Chloe who tells Valentine that Newton forgot to account for sex in his
deterministic universe. Heat, like sex, is unchangeable, persistent, and random. A hypothesis of “The future is all programmed like a computer” gets discredited with amusing laughter for its sole reason offered is “all because of sex”. Stoppard could also with wit and intelligence write about the pain of adultery and the excitement of love in *The Real Thing*, just as Harold Pinter did in his *Betrayal*. *Arcadia* is not devoid of poetry and passion, even if it treats difficult issues of thermodynamics and metaphysics evidencing interdependence of art and science.

The linguistic and semiotic ideas of structuralism as well as postmodernism will be useful to assessing the creative constructs by the playwright Stoppard. Moreover, the dramatist’s playful linguistic constructs and, most often, his deconstructive debunking of the esteemed authorities such as Beckett, Joyce, or Shakespeare have emerged as an interesting site of critical contestations. But the parodic angles problematizing these constructs make his plays more interesting. It may be found that, among others, Rodney Simrad’s reception of the Stoppard play is more sensitive to the parodic perspective in which the present thesis has of course its interest. Simrad has observed, “Stoppard’s work is a comedic and farcical presentation of serious thought” that “reflects postmodern existence by its celebration of multiplicity, by its presentation of alternatives.”

Much of the negative criticism of the Stoppardian play seems to result from reader’s failure of appreciating the comedic and parodic angles involved in the structurality and textuality of his plays. The study thus is an attempt to see parody, especially its postmodern variety, as a crucial creative force in Stoppard and explore its radical effects affecting a whole gamut of other important aspects of his art.
Hence *Parody and the Play* is the title of the thesis. It proposes to examine whether parody structures the Stoppard play and whether it is a precondition for the play to shape up, and more importantly, whether it has redeeming effects on the dramatic context and characters. As parody normally applies playful modes, the study faces a question to address: Has it got the enabling force to free the play and spectators from naturalized assumptions of times and life, ideological, cultural, metaphysical, religious, or it only superficially entangles his plays abundantly in surprises, paradoxes, and interrogations?

It is felt that Stoppard’s inventive intelligence helps to generate parody simultaneously from within the play, even from casual events. Thus, parody may be thought to constitute the unpredictable in Stoppard, and in its unpredictability, parody assumes the postmodern nuances. In other words, it is difficult at times to conceive a Stoppard play without its parodic form and the parodic without a dramatic structure. Moreover, the presence of parody has the ability to complicate the established genre of the ‘well-made comedy’ in the sense that it could comically transcend the other’s self-authenticated limits and teasingly turn a play to an open-ended affair as in real life. Hence the crucial place that parody holds in Stoppard’s dramatic imagination. The playwright is on the side of life, which he as an artist wants to see as freed from life-constraining limits is energized by responsibilities to the community living. This common concern happens to be a later development in Stoppard’s consciousness.

The present study would like to explore the creative construct of the Stoppard play and examine how far the dramatist has succeeded in turning his construct into a meaningful experience for the spectator beyond the bounds of
unhelpful criticism of his plays as the texts of plagiarism and pastiche. Still, one cannot help agreeing that for Stoppard “the play’s the thing” (more than anything), when he emphasizes in an interview that, “plays are events rather than texts,” not to be merely interpreted by professionals. “They’re written to happen, not to be read.” So, the interest of the present study consists in exploring the possibility of parody radically affecting his creative vision, which is felt to have exerted his magical powers in creating a good spectacle.

Stoppard’s characters are found engaging lively dialogues and discussions on politics, philosophy, art, and belief which throw insights into the dynamics of contemporary theater in Britain. Stoppard’s career moves gradually to TV plays marked by playfulness and interest in style. He continues to be regarded as a celebrated British playwright in today’s theater and had been Knighted in 1997. Stoppard’s plays are marked by his characteristically postmodern mix of erudition and playfulness. What have seriously preoccupied his dramatic sensibility appear to be overweighed with doubts about of the spurious order in life and the world, with uncertainties accentuated by death, and more nuanced by insurmountable incompatibilities between assumptions and facts. But he is no nihilist or defeated an artist. As artist he is not apolitical or amoral or insensitively farcical, not also politically diehard or morally didactic. Someway, a liminal state between the opposing morals of narrowly structured life, the in-betweenness, would define Stoppard’s dramatic sensibility and his worldview. Insurmountable contradictions and incompatibilities besetting reality and life are found to be attended by Stoppard with modes of vibrant intellect and vigorous parody.
Works Cited:


6. Ibid 79.


8. Ibid 272.


15Ibid 51.


