

**...plays are not things but only words that refer to other words,
and those words refer to still other words, and so on into the
densely overpopulated world of literary language**

-Harold Bloom

Let no one parody a poet unless he loves him

-Sir Theodore Martin

4. LITERARY ALLUSION: FALSE EXITS OR DRAMATIC HERITAGE?

When endeavouring to determine the nature, function and effect of allusion as a dramatic device it is evident that a significant diversity regarding this subject exists among modern critics. Furthermore, there appears to be some indecisiveness as to the difference and distinction between the concepts of allusion, quotation, metaphor, reference, parody, pastiche and plagiarism. This survey, then, will be an attempt to determine and define the true nature, function and effect of allusion.

4.1 What is allusion?

An allusion is generally referred to as an explicit or indirect reference to a person, place or event in other works of literature, or to a person, place or event in history, mythology, the Bible, and so forth. It is thus evident, even at the outset of this survey, that allusion can be employed to give weight to an argument and that it can provide added depth and meaning by calling to mind all the ideas and thoughts commonly associated with the subject alluded to.

It is extremely difficult to separate derivative elements such as subconscious echoes or half-conscious reminiscences from allusions proper, where a certain context is deliberately employed. Weldon Thornton argues:

Allusion is distinguished from other varieties of metaphor or analogy by the greater complexity and potential its context necessarily brings with it; it is a metaphor with an almost inexhaustible number of points of comparison. No matter how skillfully an author uses an ordinary image, such as a rose, there are only limited points of comparison to be developed - color, beauty, length of life, etc. But an allusion to Lucifer, for example, provides a framework of relations among characters, qualities of personality, themes, structural patterns, all of which may be put to use if the author has the desire and the genius to do so (1961:3).

There are thus definitional problems regarding allusion. It is important however, to note that a distinction can be drawn between direct quotation, allusive quotation and allusion proper. When an author is employing direct quotation as a dramatic device he appears to be doing it consciously; in other words, he knows he is handling the bequeathed riches of other men and thus he has to conform to certain principles, in particular the basic principle of aptness. The truly apt quotation "lights up" and, in the literal sense, illustrates the sentence or passage of which it is a part and, as if in return, a kind of reflected light shines back upon the quotation.

Allusive quotation can best be illustrated by looking at an example by Gray in The Bard:

Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries

(in Vallins, 1960:63).

This is a clear echo and thus allusive quotation of Shakespeare's lines in Julius Caesar:

As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit this sad heart

(Maskew Miller, Act I, scene ii).

In modern times deliberate allusive quotation appears to be a major poetic artifice as is clear in Eliot's early work, particularly in The Waste Land. He sets classical themes and allusions in modern contexts with the result that his work appears to be a web of Christian and mythological allusions with an effect of grandeur which functions strongly on the subliminal level.

Allusion can be divided into different categories when one considers its aesthetic and verbal qualities. These are, for example, that of pseudo-aphorism or proverb, in which the universal and memorable effect of such expressions are feigned by the writer, that of the grotesque or perverse, in which we recognize an original text mainly through the "distortion" presented by the author, that which might be called ventriloquism seeing that the writer repeats himself, and that which is referred to as reflex, in which obsessive responses of the writer transform external and apparently unconnected events into repetitive narrative. These are only a few of the multiple kinds of allusion but they serve to illustrate the immense complexity of the nature of allusion.

Classical allusions appear to permeate literature. Modern dramatists clearly exhibit a need for works to have both general significance and grandeur. They seem to hope that classical allusions will add magnificence and majesty to their plays. By incorporating, for example, details and echoes of Greek Tragedy in their dramas, they endeavour to graft the new drama onto powerful roots and to magnify modern plays by studding them with relics of the more magnificent Greek Drama.

It is evident that allusion in the broad sense is closely allied to allusive quotation. It is perceived to function on various levels ranging from general overall structure down to the very names of characters, and, as a dramatic device, it serves an amazingly wide variety of functions. Consequently, it reflects the hidden and mysterious depths of a human action assuming the appearance of a key which must be grasped before the reader is able to make a significant whole out of what seems, at first, to be disconnected fragments. Thus the initial feeling of mystification experienced by the reader is followed by the pleasure of discovery and recognition. Writers continually establish their subjects by hint and allusion rather than direct statement.

Some critics tend to feel that allusion implies indefiniteness, understatement, and an ultimate distrust of words. According to Vallins "all allusion, which travels far beyond the limits of Classical Mythology and ranges the whole world, is bound in the nature of things, to leave the reader panting a little way behind. The writer, like the setter of a quiz or cross-word puzzle, has the advantage" (1960:64). Whether an author's allusions are drawn out of common stock such as the Bible, literature both ancient and modern, famous characters and the great events of history or whether they are more private to himself, the result of a deep and specialized learning, the reader ought to be able to keep up with the writer. Nevertheless, should the reader lose him altogether, it does not make his writing abstruse or obscure, it simply implies that the writer possesses certain knowledge the reader does not.

Allusions are an integral part of a writer's thought and subject-matter. With some authors such as Tom Stoppard, T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, allusion is a basic technique of composition which constitutes the very core of their work. Nevertheless, a renowned critic such as I.A. Richards, in the Principles of Literary Criticism has condemned allusion as a "trap", a "shibboleth", and an invitation to "insincerity". Yet, at the end of the same work, in an appendix entitled The Poetry of T.S. Eliot, what has earlier been condemned as "recondite reference" and allowed only a small place in literature, is praised as "a technical device for compression".

It is thus evident that criticism of allusion ranges from praise to condemnation and is marked by inconsistencies. Furthermore, seen in the light of the fact that there is no distinct line between the concepts of allusive quotation, direct quotation, allusive echoes, illustrative quotation, sustained quotation, metaphor, reference on various levels, and general allusion, the rest of this survey will be based on the assumption that the term "allusion" includes all of the above.

In an enlightening article on the poetics of literary allusion, Ziva Ben-Porat points out that the term "literary allusion" is misleading in that it implies that allusion occurs only in literature and that all allusions operating in literary texts belong to this class. It is important to keep in mind that not all allusions in literary works are literary allusions and that allusions may occur outside literature itself.

Ben-Porat states that literary allusion is part of the general phenomenon of allusion and that this term needs to be redefined. She subsequently presents her definition of "literary allusion" stating that it is a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts. This activation is achieved by means of the manipulation of a special signal: a sign in a given text characterized by an additional larger referent which is always an independent text. Subsequently, the simultaneous activation of the two texts results in the formation of intertextual patterns.

Thus it is clear that literary allusion differs from allusion in general and the common base of all allusions is the element of indirect reference. When attempting to explain the intricate process involved in the actualization of an allusion, Ben-Porat points out that the marker is an element or pattern which belongs to another text. This marker maintains the metonymic structure of

the relationship sign-referent which characterizes all allusions and is used for the activation of independent elements from the evoked text. Subsequently, the complex process of actualizing a literary allusion can be described as a movement which starts with the recognition of the marker and ends with intertextual patterning.

The process of actualizing an allusion can be divided into four stages:

1. The recognition of a marker in a given sign

Such recognition implies the identification of marking elements as related to an independent text. This does not depend on formal identity. For example, a distorted quotation is a marker recognizable as belonging to a certain system, despite its new form. In contrast to this, an exact quotation, when used for the triggering of an allusion, is an example of a marker and a marked which are formally identical.

2. The identification of the evoked text

This stage is an obvious result of the first. There are, however, instances in which recollection of the marked alone is easier for the interpreter and may suffice for the completion of the third stage. This can happen when the marker and marked are formally and semantically different.

3. Modification of the initial local interpretation of the signal

The modification is the result of the interaction between two texts and results in the formation of at least one intertextual pattern. The patterning of the two independent interpretations leads to the modified version needed for the fuller interpretation of the alluding text.

4. The activation of the evoked text as a whole, in an attempt to form maximum intertextual patterns

This stage implies the activation of the whole alluding text. Regardless of the varying importance of the identification of the evoked text and of the realization of the meaning of the marked, the further activation of elements is the particular aim for which the literary allusion is characteristically employed

(Ben - Porat, 1976:109-111).

This classification provides a clear indication of the actual process involved in the realization of a literary allusion which appears to be an extremely variable, functional and complex device as it is employed in literature. It is important to keep in mind that it is possible to read and understand the alluding text without actualizing the allusion. If it is actualized, however, it serves to enrich interpretation and amplify the text in which it is manipulated.

When considering the basic typology of literary allusion one has to keep in mind that this is not a device used for linking texts which are initially totally

unrelated. It is rather a device employed for the linking of both unrelated and related texts.

Initially unrelated texts have no common elements, except for the marked, while initially related texts are characterized by shared world components. Thus various major elements which constitute the fictional world are common to both texts and these act as markers. The reason for linking such texts is their explicit relatedness.

According to Jakobson (1956) these relationships and the types of literary allusions they yield may be called metaphoric and metonymic respectively. Jakobson states: "One topic may lead to another either through their similarity or their contiguity. The metaphoric way would be the most appropriate term for the first case, and the metonymic way for the second, since they find their most condensed expression in metaphor and metonymy respectively" (in Ben- Porat, 1976:117).

Ben-Porat provides us with a detailed example of each of these types and draws some interesting conclusions. Allusion is a versatile and multifarious device. The less related two texts appear to be at the outset, the more similarities and correspondences are brought about through allusion and the more related two texts seem to be, the farther apart these appear to grow as elements are recalled and patterns formed in the process of actualizing an allusion.

Thus it happens that a weak local marker can become a sibling of the alluding text through the process of actualization of the allusion and, in contrast, a strong marker introduced in the form of an all-encompassing allusion, can function as the structural backbone of the text, yet the actualization of that allusion indicates that the source text and the alluding text are entirely different in nature.

Ben-Porat concludes that

metaphorically or metonymically generated the literary allusion remains a device for the simultaneous activation of two independent texts...But whether it be to enhance and clarify thematic patterns, to provide the ironic regulating pattern, to add links to existing ones or to provide missing links, to establish an analogy or to supply a fictional world, whether it appears in veiled or overt form, concentrated or dispersed, local or all-inclusive - certain features of literary allusion are constants, always present where the device is employed. These constants are the independent existence of both texts, the presence of a signal - the directional marker - in the alluding text, the presence of elements in both texts which can be linked together in unfixed, unpredictable intertextual patterns, and the process of actualization which reflects in all its stages the effort to reconstruct a fuller text (1976:127).

4.2 Allusion and intertextuality

The appreciation and understanding of literature is significantly enhanced and enriched by our awareness of its internal reference. Recent stylistic criticism has developed the notion of intertextuality.

According to this concept a work of literature is influenced by texts which have preceded it, showing traces of the earlier texts in various ways ranging from direct quotation to faint reminiscences of linguistic structure. It is a study still in its early development and it functions through recognition of the way in which writers have often found a place in their work for the works of their predecessors.

Thus it is not difficult to detect the close association between literary allusion and the concept of intertextuality. According to Culler:

...literary works are to be considered not as autonomous entities, 'organic wholes', but as intertextual constructs: sequences which have meaning in relation to other texts which they take up, cite, parody, refute, or generally transform. A text can be read only in relation to other texts, and it is made possible by the codes which animate the discursive space of a culture (1981:38).

This is a major and vital point in literary semiotics which is based on two assumptions. Firstly, that literature should be treated as a mode of signification and communication, in that a proper description of a literary work must refer to the meanings it has for its readers and, secondly, that one can identify the effects of the signification one wants to account for. The concept of intertextuality is thus integral to the understanding of the function and effect of literary allusion.

Intertextuality basically displays a double focus seeing that it calls to attention the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that a literary work has its meaning only because certain relevant things have previously been written. It is important to note that the study of intertextuality is not merely the investigation of sources and influences popularly conceived but that it casts its net wider to include anonymous discursive practices and codes whose origins are lost that make the signifying practices of later texts possible.

Barthes points out that although the quotations of which a text are made may be anonymous and untraceable, they still function as already read. It is thus not always of integral importance to be able to pinpoint a specific allusion in order for it to function. Closely allied to this notion is that of repetition, which has been referred to as "the other face of allusion", and "the dark side of the moon whose reflected light we see in explicit references" (Hughes in Martz and Williams, 1978:304). Hughes feels that unlike referential allusion, which requires an identifiable source, repetition needs only recurrence to create its aesthetic effect. Furthermore, while the making and reading of allusive references depends upon memory and recollected texts, repetition

carries memory with it, freeing us from recollection and projecting us into an aesthetic present and future.

Intertextuality is a difficult concept to grasp and work with, as has been pointed out by various critics. Julia Kristeva defines intertextuality as the sum of knowledge that makes it possible for texts to have meaning. In addition, Laurent Jenny observes that "outside of intertextuality the literary work would be quite simply imperceptible, in the same way as an utterance in an as yet unknown language" (in Culler, 1981:104). He also points out that intertextuality designates everything that enables one to recognize pattern and meaning in texts and that it immediately poses a delicate problem of identification. He asks at what point can one start to speak of the presence of one text in another as intertextuality.

Subsequently some critics endeavour to distinguish intertextuality from "simple allusion" or "reminiscence". In the latter case a text repeats an element from a prior text without using its meaning and in the former it alludes to or redeploys an entire structure, a pattern or form and meaning from a prior text. One has to consider, however, whether it is at all possible to allude to a certain text without, simultaneously, alluding to its meaning. Furthermore, it does not really seem important to distinguish between various degrees of allusion, thus whether a text alludes to an entire structure or merely to a faint reminiscence of an already existing literary work. In addition one can ask if repetitions and allusions have to be excluded from intertextuality proper, what happens to them? Where do they fit in?

It is thus clear that allusion should be regarded as being closely related to the concept of intertextuality and that it is futile to endeavour to exclude the one from the other.

It is of some importance to keep in mind that intertextuality functions in close relation to the concept of decodification. According to Keir Elam "...decodification of a given text derives above all from the spectator's familiarity with other texts" (1980:93). He points out that an "ideal" spectator is one who possesses an adequately detailed textual background to enable him to identify the relevant relations and use them as a basis for sufficient decodification. Subsequently, every spectator or reader's interpretation and perception of a given text is in reality a new construction of it depending on the extent and relevancy of the textual background within his grasp.

A recent concept which is of significance here, is that of deconstruction. Barbara Johnson has described it as "a careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text" (in Culler, 1981:ix). Derrida, who is generally considered as "the father of Deconstruction" has commented upon the relationship between deconstruction and intertextuality. He refers to the reconstruction of the textual field out of the workings of intertextuality pointing out that without this reconstruction, deconstruction is sure to regress and slip back into idealism. In his turn, Culler argues that deconstruction is created by repetitions, deviations and disfigurations.

It is thus evident that a very complex, though close-knit, relationship exists between the concepts of intertextuality, decodification and deconstruction

When endeavouring to determine the nature and effect of allusion as a dramatic literary device, this relationship should be kept in mind. Wilhelm Liebenberg feels that

the codes that constitute the many voices that participate in the intertextual weaving of the text, are conventions, rooted in society, structured by ideology. It is the identification of these codes...that enables one to relate the text to society and history, to discover how writing reads reality, how the codal possibilities have been limited, how meaning is overdetermined, how the text is structured ideologically (Liebenberg, 1985:47).

Another notion which should be kept in mind here is that there is a distinction between macrotextual and intertextual allegiance, and thus allusion. This implies that allusion can either be to other works within the Stoppard canon (macrotextual) or to other texts in general (intertextual). Allusion can be regarded as a literary sign. Serpieri says:

The literary sign is powerfully overdetermined by its very textual situation - a situation that endows it at once with syntagmatic (horizontal) and paradigmatic (vertical) meanings - over and above those values that it assures through its macrotextual and intertextual allegiances. But it likewise, and no less crucially, takes on meaning from the historical, cultural and pragmatic contexts within which it is produced. The literary sign, [allusion], in other words, brings together a complex of meanings at the crossroads between different routes of signification: textual and extratextual, linguistic and semiotic (Serpieri, 1984:1).

When considering these major points in literary semiotics one comes to the conclusion that the whole of literature has attained the appearance of an infinite network of allusion. Derrida has pointed out that in the tracing of allusions an added textual particle opens onto another text and implies the reading of this text with the result that the analysis of all this would be never-ending. If you were to follow all the threads you would find yourself caught within an interminable network of allusion. Many literary works are intricate chains of allusions and to ignore these would be to ignore the very substance of these works of art.

4.3 The nature and function of allusion: why allusion?

As has been pointed out, literature appears to create its own heritage in the sense that memorable phrases pass into the language itself. A certain writer may strike out a phrase or sentence which is alluded to so frequently by subsequent authors that it assumes the form of an ordinary idiom. Phrases such as "to be or not to be" and "neither a borrower nor a lender be" immediately come to mind. It thus seems that by the transmuting power of allusion great authors repay, with magnificent interest, their "debt" to the language they use, although this is obviously done unconsciously.

When an author uses a specific allusion he very often applies it in circumstances very different from the original context. Nevertheless, the effect created is still very strong and significant. Words taken far beyond their original context and even perhaps "misquoted" can contribute greatly to enrich the common idiom and keep literature and the language itself vital.

English literature is a body of creative literature which evidently has a shared code of communication of its own. Allusion fulfils an integral function in this communication. It is natural that the writers of literature are usually lovers and admirers of literature and that they endeavour to draw upon the riches of other authors in order to communicate and create works of aesthetic significance. This results in the fact that our own enjoyment of literature is increased and enhanced by the recognition of allusions to previous texts. Thus, as we return to the earlier work, our memory of what another author has derived from it, enlivens our involvement in the whole great corpus of literature. It is clear that allusion to a great extent depends on a reader's silent recognition for its effect.

When considering the nature of allusion itself, it is immediately evident that it is closely associated with the concepts of freedom and tradition. The great literary tradition created by, for example, Shakespeare, provides a framework for contemporary writers. By means of allusion an author can, consciously or unconsciously, attempt to "recapture" something of a lost past, i.e. a time during which everything seemed to make sense and, significantly, endeavour to identify and associate with literary tradition. Furthermore, literary tradition is often associated with authority, hence the idea that allusion can be viewed as an appeal to authority. Hannah Arendt has reflected upon this phenomenon:

Insofar as the past has been transmitted as tradition, it possesses authority; insofar as authority presents itself historically, it becomes tradition. Walter Benjamin knew that the break in tradition and the loss of authority which occurred in his lifetime were irreparable, and he concluded that he had to discover new ways of dealing with the past. In this he became a master when he discovered that the transmissibility of the past had been replaced by its citability and that in place of its authority there had arisen a strange power to settle down, piecemeal, in the present and to deprive it of 'peace of mind', the mindless peace of complacency (in Martz and Williams, 1978:301).

Thus the modern text, through allusion, proposes to activate a strong ancestral presence and authority that cannot really be questioned or doubted. There seems to be a deep-seated need for continuity within modern writers, especially for a literary history and tradition that allows them to remember and identify with prior authors, without being trapped in the past. It is thus clear that allusion enables an author to associate, simultaneously, with tradition and freedom.

The twentieth century has been marked by a palpitating sense of freedom. Subsequently, contemporary writers are forever questioning the significance

and meaning of existence and concepts such as despair, disillusionment, apprehension, disruption, doubt, meaninglessness; and loss of identity have assumed the importance of slogans in their work. The suffocating effect their work has on the reader derives, to a large extent, from the hopelessness of the entire situation as given form by them within their work. It is thus not difficult to detect the tendency of contemporary writers to assume the "freedom" which is characteristic of the modern age in general.

...doubt, disbelief, and despair are not new. What has seemed more and more important, as the century has aged, is freedom. The more we have learned of relativity, the more skilled have become the totalitarian persuaders of absolutes; the more eccentric and experimental our art, the more academics, critics and commentators try to classify it... (Hunter, 1982 :130).

Thus it is clear that allusion is closely associated with freedom: a phenomenon true to the nature and heart of the spirit of the present age.

It should be kept in mind that, somewhat paradoxically, allusion tends to confer on the past an increasingly literary modernity. Thus, the technique of allusion has given a writer greater power and a significant ability to poignancy. The past should therefore not be viewed as a burden. Allusion can function in order to lighten and enlighten the past through identification. The modern literary world should recognize the value and necessity of allusion and should employ the modern ability to recall and reconstruct the past through allusion.

Allusion is seen to function very subtly. By seeming to repeat something a text creates a context for itself, and even if we are not exactly sure what it repeats or alludes to, we still draw or twist the context to suit the text. Every allusion fulfils a specific function in its immediate context, usually by evoking a parallel of some kind. More important, separate allusions often combine to form implications that suggest certain characteristics of the play's world. Van Laan points out that "the allusion...sets up an independent analogy designed to contribute its own inherent implications to the character, event, or world that it parallels" (1970:174).

It is thus difficult to agree with critics when they propose that allusion should be seen as a burden and that it has become a mechanical replication. Furthermore, allusion has been accused of being lifeless and incapable of producing any significant effects. To my mind, it is ultimately powerful and explosive in that it places a certain inheritance within the reach of every modern author.

Allusion often assumes the nature of a chameleon in that two almost identical allusions could drastically alter their meanings in different contexts. Consequently, it has been professed that the true nature of allusion is illusion in that no fusion between that which has been learned from a previous text and that which is invented by the author himself is possible. Furthermore, it has been argued that the borrowed text cannot be transferred in a way to mean something identical to the meaning of the borrower text. It is true that all allusions inevitably call to mind the questions: what was before and after

the quotation or episode in the text from which it was lifted? How does the context of the adopted relate to that of the adoptive? We have to keep in mind, however, that whether the author uses an allusion consciously or not, he does have a certain purpose in mind which does not necessarily have to be that of trying to create something identical to the text he is alluding to.

Allusions appear to be "open invitations" to readers to dig up the totality of the allusions although they are not forced to do so. Considering the context from which an allusion has been extracted does, however, appear to enrich the reality of the adoptive text. True to its transcendent nature, an allusion can be used to function in any way, in any text, after it has been excised from its original context. Therefore the possibilities for employing allusion as a functional device are endless and among the multiple levels where we find allusion, are those pertaining to structure, form, character, feeling, tone and language.

In that they employ allusion on various levels, the works of authors such as Stoppard, Eliot and Joyce have attained the appearance of extensive networks of allusion and they appear to have turned the use of this dramatic device into an independent form of art.

True to its nature, allusion is usually perceived to imply an integral association with what is generally referred to as metaphor, parody, reference and so forth. Furthermore, allusion sometimes appears in the form of direct quotation which usually leaves no doubt as to the identity of the adopted text, and in other instances allusion appears to hide the supposed resemblance of adopted and adoptive texts. This has led critics to accuse allusion of being false. Nevertheless, although allusions are sometimes regarded as "illusions in disguise" they are still inherently powerful and magnetic.

The process of allusion involves the excision of a part or fragment from a whole while the author obviously wishes this fragment to assume the identity and part of the whole from which it has been taken. In other words, the allusion possesses the adopted work's entire contextuality. Hence the notion that allusion is an essentially transcendent device.

In conjunction with this aspect of the nature of allusion we find that allusions are figures of eternal postponement. They conjure up elements from the past and the device of allusion has given rise to an allusive textual chain which runs through the entire corpus of literature itself. Furthermore, allusion is essentially a technique of "legal borrowing" which places authority and authenticity within the grasp of fictional characters. It is perceived to function subtly and furtively, announcing its originality only in secret. Allusion involves the excision, appropriation, and absorption of material essentially belonging to others but it is done in a generally accepted manner. It has been likened to an "alien parasite" within the body of the main text. This is, however, a misconception, seeing that allusion has proved itself an essentially functional and worthwhile device. It is the element in fiction that allows for the substitution of meaning by reiteration.

Within T.S. Eliot's critical studies, all literary works have become participants in a synchronic pattern of mutually interacting relationships. Quotations and

allusions are perceived as floating freely in this ideal order so that the participating author is at liberty to select bits and pieces to amplify his meaning and assert his continuity with the tradition. Allusion has attained such importance that it can never be disregarded without serious damage to the text. According to Wheeler, allusions have significant functions only for those readers who recognize them seeing that they depend upon their relationship to the main thematic or plot lines for their effects which can be followed without paying attention to the allusions themselves. In this view, however, allusions become ornaments, which is essentially a misapprehension, seeing that allusions allow another world to radiate into the apparently self-contained world of the literary work.

This brings us to another essential function of allusion, viz. the fact that it allows the literary work to participate in and become part of cultural traditions and ideas while, simultaneously, permitting it to remain autonomous and self-contained.

Weldon Thornton has pointed out that the function of allusion is essentially similar to that of metaphor, viz. the development and revelation of character, structure, and theme, and, when skilfully employed, it does all of these simultaneously. Furthermore, an allusion achieves its purpose through inviting a comparison and contrast of the context in which it is used with its original context.

Allusion is a tantalizing, powerful, subtle, valuable, and, ultimately, necessary dramatic device from which there appears to be no escape: literature itself is one massive labyrinth of allusion.

Allusion at times seems to be the petrol that drives the machine, and in Rosencrantz and Travesties it is virtually the road system

- Jim Hunter

4.4 Stoppard and allusion: a search for significance and identity by means of a road system

Stoppard has often been criticised for making such extensive use of allusion. Critics and readers alike seem to feel that Stoppard, for all his brilliance, is fundamentally a leech, drawing the lifeblood of his work from the inventions of others. Thus a play such as Rosencrantz has not only been regarded as dazzling, remarkable and thrilling, but also as derivative, whose debts to Beckett, Pirandello and Shakespeare are far more important than any original contribution by Stoppard. The quintessence of this critical view is Robert Brustein's description of the play as a "theatrical parasite" (in Cahn, 1979:35). Such a view, however, stems from a misunderstanding and failure to appreciate Stoppard's accomplishments, particularly with regard to his extensive use of the dramatic device of allusion. Plays breed plays and it would be unfair, and somewhat unfortunate, to find fault with Stoppard for going to other plays for inspiration.

In contrast with such a view as Brustein's, Stoppard has been hailed as the master of parody. In his plays, particularly Rosencrantz and Travesties, he fully exploits the potential of parody and allusion. The "host-plays" - Hamlet and The Importance of Being Earnest - nourish and control Stoppard's creations to the fullest and we find that they provide the basic and fundamental framework within which Stoppard's plays find their being. "The borrowed amalgam is inventively modified and made to absorb layer upon layer of newly created parodic text. In this sense Stoppard's parody transcends all the known limits of dramatic burlesque...and pervades practically the whole texture of the play" (Kennedy, 1983:228).

It is, then, the purpose of this chapter to determine how, and for which purposes, Stoppard employs allusion in his plays. Moreover, even though a fairly extensive list of authors, including T.S. Eliot, Pirandello, Henry James, Yeats, Butler, and Lenin, alluded to by Stoppard, could be compiled, this discussion will be limited to a consideration of his allusions to Shakespeare, Beckett, Wilde, and Joyce.

Hunter points out that Stoppard borrows from, alludes to, and travesties the authors he likes. The way in which he succeeds in employing these "technicalities" in his plays, subtly and exquisitely, illustrates Stoppard's exceptional craftsmanship and his remarkable skill as a dramatist. Allusion appears to be at the core of his work and "allusion on various levels remains the most tantalizingly effective dramatic device Stoppard employs" (Combrink, 1979:192). These levels range from overall structure down to the very names of the characters, and, as has already been pointed out, allusion serves an amazingly wide variety of functions.

Allusion and travesty are at the heart of Stoppard's work. They assert irreverence for sacred cows, the artist displaying his freedom; they work by rebounds, one off another; and they are forms of homage. They are also fun. The glee of recognizing a sidelong allusion is a pretty innocent pleasure. Like being good at crossword puzzles, it's nothing to be proud of, but certainly

nothing to be ashamed of either. And if the allusion is something classically cultural, and we pick it up, it may cheer up a little of the J. Alfred Prufrock in each of us: ah, I am not wholly excluded... As with most of Stoppard's effects, a prime aim is entertainment (Hunter, 1982:132).

4.4.1 William Shakespeare: a literary martyr

To any critic or serious reader of literature, Shakespeare inevitably represents the epitome of literature itself. It is thus not surprising that Stoppard borrows from, alludes to, and parodies Shakespeare's work to a large extent and it immediately becomes apparent that there is more to Stoppard's "relationship" with Shakespeare than meets the eye.

The most extensive use of allusion to Shakespeare is found in Rosencrantz. These characters find their origin in Hamlet and the action in Stoppard's play winds in and out of that in Hamlet. Thus the two plays are so intertwined that to try to separate them would be impossible and destructive. Because of the use of allusion in Rosencrantz, it has been referred to as a piece of literary detection and it has been pointed out that Stoppard has taken, and blown up, a single detail from Hamlet and wrenched enough material from it to create a new drama. Thus there is a significant interpenetration between these two plays and Hamlet makes a stately transit through Stoppard's play "like a planet encountering a meteor shower, and with the same pyrotechnic consequences" (James, 1975:72). The mainspring of Rosencrantz may be the perception that the facts of their deaths, mattering so little to Hamlet, was something that ought to have mattered to Shakespeare. Whitaker asks:

What are they doing, and where? Are they in Hamlet? Or just outside it? Or in an outrageously impossible world? Or in our own time? Or inside our assembled heads where nothing shows? Or in the timeless land of the dead, where a single experience repeats itself endlessly? Or in the open space where Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon wait for Godot? Or the closed space where his Hamm and Clov are always 'getting on'? Or in a self-parodic play on the empty stage of the Old Vic? The answer, we will discover, is 'all of the above'. From moment to moment as the play proceeds, all of those frames of reference will be moving in and out of focus (1983:38-39).

It is thus partly because of the extensive use of allusion that many of Stoppard's plays, including Rosencrantz, find their being in such intricate and complex webs of reference and connotation. This play can ultimately be regarded as one dealing with the question of identity, and its main themes clearly reflect the concerns of contemporary dramatists in general.

The most general level on which allusion to Shakespeare can clearly be detected is that of structure and plot. Rosencrantz exists within a unique plot which allows for a total consummation of Stoppard's thematic concepts. The

story Stoppard provides concerning his unanchored courtiers is but a tangent to the circle defined by Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Rosencrantz is moulded within an intriguing tripartite structure. The foundation is, of course, Hamlet, where an intellectual struggle is a heroic endeavour. Superimposed on this is Stoppard's version, and thus allusion to, Shakespeare's play and a reduction to absurdity of everything noble and weighty in Hamlet. This is significant in that it indicates and reflects upon Stoppard's use of Shakespeare in an attempt, on the one hand, to find order in a confused universe, and, on the other hand, to indicate how far everything, once noble and heroic, has degenerated and disintegrated into a formless and helpless mass of non-being.

It is immediately evident that Stoppard had good reason to choose to travesty and allude to Hamlet. The first and most obvious reason is probably his affection and regard for it but more important is the fact that it deals with subjects very similar to Stoppard's. Consequently, allusion, as a dramatic device, can function effectively and, one might argue, more "easily". The most significant exchanges and soliloquies in Hamlet have been eliminated, diluted with comedy, or so drastically abridged that they are merely reminiscences of Shakespeare's passages. This is functional in that it underlines the pervading sense of absurdity, disintegration and desperation in Rosencrantz.

As has been pointed out, allusion functions in close association with intertextuality and seeing that the process of actualization of an allusion implies the simultaneous activation of two texts, Stoppard succeeds in extending the meaning and action of his play to such an extent that it appears to become part of a much wider and perhaps universal action, thereby forming new, and ultimately significant, intertextual patterns and associations.

Stoppard's use of Shakespeare's masterpiece can be likened to the intriguing use that has been made in this context of the concept of a palimpsest¹⁾ in that his text of Rosencrantz appears to be superimposed on that of Hamlet. Thus Shakespeare's original writing has been deleted, if only to a certain extent, while simultaneously still being tantalisingly visible to the reader, thereby exerting an almost palpable shaping influence on Stoppard's text. It is impossible for the one to exist without the other, seeing that the two texts are simultaneously, although not equally, visible. Shakespeare's text is perceived to glimmer through that of Stoppard, which is evidently more visible in that it has been written more recently and is the text superimposed on the original by Shakespeare.

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- 1) A palimpsest is a manuscript in roll or codex form carrying a text erased, or partly erased underneath an apparent additional text. The underlying text is said to be "in palimpsest" and even though the parchment or other surface is much abraded, the older text is recoverable by means of ultraviolet light. This concept of a palimpsest meaning that one text glimmers through a more recent and more clearly written text, has been used with increasing frequency within the context of contemporary literature.

Stoppard's plays can thus, to a certain degree, be regarded as "literature of the second degree" which derives its power of existence from the very fact that it is based on an already existing macrotext. It is evidently an extremely valuable phenomenon within the wider context of literature itself in that it gives form and permanence to the historical development of literature while simultaneously leading to the formation of new and ever-changing intertextual patterns which, in their turn, provide the basis for new genres. Examples are the genres of parody, travesty and pastiche which would not have existed at all if it were not for the phenomenon of hypertextuality, i.e. a particular form of intertextuality which arises as a result of the connection between a new text and the original from which it has been derived, in this instance, Stoppard's Rosencrantz, which would not have existed but for its allusion to Hamlet.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern seem to become emblematic of all men, in particular modern man, perpetually seeking identity and meaning. Allusion is so integral and essential to Stoppard's play's very meaning and existence, that these courtiers actually have to attempt to locate their identities during the flickering moments of illumination furnished by their occasional contacts with the themes and action of Hamlet. Allusion functions so subtly in Rosencrantz that the reader finds himself being transferred from the one to the other play ceaselessly, without pomp or ceremony, and this device is essential to the latter in that the two protagonists endeavour to find the reason for and meaning of their very existence in Shakespeare's masterpiece.

As has been pointed out, the most obvious level of allusion to Hamlet is that of structure and plot. From the very beginning of Stoppard's play, the reader realizes that this world is indeed "out of joint". Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are summoned to Elsinore on a matter of "extreme urgency". We find them tossing coins, which come down heads up over ninety consecutive times, defying all the rules of chance. Even at this stage we sense that the two courtiers will remain perforce waiting in the wings for the rest of their lives, never quite grasping what is happening on the centre-stage of life. "They can perhaps make a choice of some kind, decide to act instead of merely being acted upon; but if they do, they will be denying their essential nature, and will be able to assert their own existence only by independently choosing to extinguish it" (Taylor, 1971:100).

Thus, through allusion Stoppard has imposed the pattern of his play upon the pre-existing pattern of Shakespeare's play. In the first scene, the laws of probability are being outrageously flouted and it is apparent that anything might happen. Much that is inexplicable actually does, adding to the confusion and disintegration which forms a web from which there is no escape. Guildenstern narrates:

The equanimity of your average tosser of coins depends upon the law, or rather a tendency, or let us say a probability, or at any rate a mathematically calculable chance, which ensures that he will not upset himself by losing too much or upset his opponent by winning too often. This made for a kind of harmony and a kind of confidence. It related the fortuitous and the ordained into a reassuring union which we recognize as nature.

The sun came up about as often as it went down, in the long run, and a coin showed heads about as often as it showed tails (1967:12-13).

As soon as we are confronted with an allusion to Hamlet, we become ensconced within the pervading awareness of disruption and confusion. Because of the actualization of the allusion, the two relevant texts have now been put to motion and from here onwards the structure and plot of the two plays are inextricably linked. The unusual and, to some, apparently meaningless, "stringing together" of unrelated events from Hamlet serves to give substance and a richer complexity of meaning to the essence of Rosencrantz: the courtiers witness the encounter with the anguished Hamlet described by Ophelia in Hamlet, Act II, scene i. The prince confuses them with an obscure reference to hawks and handsaws. Ophelia totters on stage as Hamlet snaps: "To a nunnery go". The performance of a play before the King ends in confusion and anger. Hamlet drags the dead Polonius across the stage and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are instructed to apprehend him, which leads to an essentially farcical situation. The two courtiers join their belts and hold them taut between them while Rosencrantz's trousers slide down slowly, which is, in its turn, a visual allusion to Beckett's Godot. Hamlet enters, dragging the body, and leaves by the same side which leaves the courtiers staring at him in bewilderment. Rosencrantz remarks: "That was close" and Guildenstern replies: "There's a limit to what two people can do" (p.68). Finally they find themselves en route to England with a letter that one moment bodes Hamlet's death and the next their own.

Such an account of the play's main events could seem to indicate that it is merely an amusing piece of dramatic speculation about the offstage behaviour of two Shakespearean characters, but this is indeed not the case. Stoppard has commented that his protagonists are in a situation analogous to that of the playwright. Their need is to fill the time as entertainingly as possible and his need, when he wrote the piece, was to inject enough interest and colour into each passing line in order to retain the audience's attention from moment to moment. It is thus not surprising that Stoppard has been accused of being too intellectual and calculating. Nevertheless, Stoppard's comment is of some significance concerning his use of allusion in that, in alluding to Shakespeare, amongst others, Stoppard succeeds in giving form, meaning and substance to a labyrinth of communication, which, in turn, seems to draw the audience and the reader into the very action and heart of the play.

In addition to allusion on the levels of structure and plot, strong allusion functions on the level of themes. The main themes of Rosencrantz clearly reflect the concerns of contemporary dramatists in general. These are, amongst others, the anguish about the loss of identity, the contingent nature of truth, the loss of mysteriousness and wonder, and the total and frightening dislocation of the familiar and comforting dimensions of time and space.

Relatively early in the play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet Claudius and Gertrude who had initially sought them. Almost magically the two wanderers speak the "correct" lines Shakespeare had provided them with in Hamlet, thus momentarily becoming embraced within the known play. Although direct

quotations from Hamlet are employed here, Stoppard achieves a startlingly unusual effect, underlining the courtiers' lack of identity:

- Claudius : Thanks, Rosencrantz (turning to ROS who is caught unprepared, while GUIL bows) and gentle Guildenstern (turning to GUIL who is bent double)
- Gertrude : (correcting):Thanks, Guildenstern (turning to ROS, who bows as Guil checks upward movement to bow too - both bent double, squinting at each other)
 . . . and gentle Rosencrantz. (Turning to GUIL, both straightening up - GUIL checks again and bows again) (pp.27-28).

This theme is developed further when Hamlet himself is confused with their identities:

- Hamlet : My excellent good friends: How dost thou Guildenstern? (Coming downstage with an arm raised to ROS, GUIL meanwhile bowing to no greeting.
 Hamlet corrects himself. Still to ROS.)
 Ah, Rosencrantz! (They laugh good naturedly at the mistake. They all meet midstage, turn upstage to walk, Hamlet in the middle, arm over each shoulder)
- (p.39).

Even though Rosencrantz and Guildenstern momentarily seem to find substance and identity within the action of Hamlet, they are disillusioned when their confusion and lack of identity are exploited. Their piecing together of the bits and clues derived from their "automatic roles" serves to underlie and strengthen their tedious and seemingly futile existence. Hunter points out that, on the whole, the two courtiers' uncertainty of identity is less frightening than their fixed identity, locked in the action of Hamlet. This, once again, illustrates that Stoppard's allusion to Shakespeare serves a definite purpose. The contrast between the courtiers' fixed identity in scenes from Hamlet and their total and terrifying lack of identity in Stoppard's play effectively serves to intensify the atmosphere of the play and underlie the main themes. Moreover, Stoppard's travesty here includes some affectionate satire on Shakespeare's play, specifically indicating that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are used blatantly, by the dramatist as well as by Claudius.

Thus, through alluding to Hamlet on various levels, Stoppard succeeds in demonstrating and developing major themes such as the anguish about the loss of identity and that of spiritual disintegration. Heroism has degenerated into the mock-heroic and the supernatural has disappeared, leaving an irreclaimable void. This underlies the loss of mysteriousness and wonder:

Guil

: '...I thought I saw a unicorn...' I'm sorry it wasn't a unicorn. It would have been nice to have unicorns (pp.15-16).

What could once be viewed with admiration and awe is now patronized as sentimental and futile. This dissolution is effectively embodied in the general structure of the play, continually being defined by individual situations. Everything seems to have been reduced to scientific logic and when Guildenstern applies the techniques of logic to aid him in interpreting his situation, he only becomes increasingly frantic and Rosencrantz's attempt to articulate his fears and questions about death becomes a jerky music-hall routine. Straining to discover their identities, they cannot even remember their names and efforts to understand why they suffer increase their pain. Hope and faith in what is beautiful are disappointed again and again. Whitaker comments that this play's "interrelated themes of appearance and reality, sanity and insanity, and presence and absence are broached, of course, in Hamlet itself..." (1983:46).

We have to keep in mind that although the two courtiers have a fixed identity within the plot of Hamlet, they are not bound from the beginning. At the end Guildenstern reflects:

... there must have been a moment, at the beginning, where we could have said - no. But somehow we missed it (p.95).

Yet they appear to have no active existence outside the plot of Hamlet and no real power to influence the situation in any significant way. They are, as they recognize, trapped in a machine whose master, if he exists at all, is unknown, whose direction and purpose are unclear, and whose momentum is irresistible. All they can do is to keep talking in hopes of, at best, staying sane while events act themselves out. Choice seems non-existent and the exercise of free will well-nigh impossible, or, almost worse, might actually have been anticipated and pre-ordained by mysterious external influences.

These events, actions, feelings and themes are brought to our attention through Stoppard's borrowing from, alluding to, and travestying of Hamlet. The movement in and out of Hamlet, on various levels, lies at the very heart of Rosencrantz. For instance, one of the few things Shakespeare tells us about his attendant lords is that they met "players" on the way to Elsinore, which becomes an encounter eagerly exploited by Stoppard. The theatrical metaphor in general adds much to the complexity and suggestiveness of his play. Moreover, one realizes that Stoppard's play could not have existed but for the allusion to Hamlet.

Apart from alluding to Shakespeare on the levels of structure, plot, action and themes, Stoppard also does so with regard to characterization. Stoppard actually borrows a pair of peripheral figures from Hamlet and examines their behaviour when they are not acting in one of their written scenes in the original play. Stoppard places them in the foreground while Hamlet actually becomes a minor figure. It has often been remarked that Stoppard's characters actually resemble Beckett's tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, much more closely than

they do Shakespeare's courtiers. We can, however, detect a tangible amount of allusion to Hamlet on the level of characterization in Rosencrantz.

In Hamlet Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are time-servers, and are cold and calculating opportunists who betray a friendship for the sake of a preferment and whose deaths, therefore, leave Hamlet without even a pang of remorse. In Stoppard's play they become garrulous, childlike ingratiating simpletons, bewildered by the parts they must play and by the very notion of an evil action. Through alluding to Hamlet Stoppard indicates that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are subjected to the terrifying inevitability of a literary destiny. They are trapped in a nightmare, and, "whereas players and spectators shift their identities, feign emotions, and exercise choice, characters are fixed in art and can never alter" (Hunter, 1982:136).

Thus, even though Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are two of Shakespeare's least memorable characters, they are heroes in Stoppard's play and however boring they may be as incidental noises in the tragedy of Hamlet, they are transformed into wonderfully comic and ruefully appealing characters in this interpenetration of their life and times by Tom Stoppard. Moreover, they are central to Stoppard's play in that they represent an effective way of coming to terms with a capricious universe.

Stoppard's heroes are tentatively inquisitive and questioning, and remain uncertain of everything. Although their characters are distinct, Guildenstern is sharper, more aware, persistent and resilient, while Rosencrantz is slower, gentler, softer and weaker. They are comically (and tragically?) inclined to forget which of them is called which and seem unsure of the points of the compass and even which season of the year it is. Rosencrantz cannot remember how long he has suffered from a bad memory, and only "thinks" he can think at all. Not only are there no clear truths that might enable them to interpret the situation, there may be no such commodity as "truth" in the first place. The only available truth appears to be a currency of death. They feel there may be only working "assumptions", yet when they use these to explain Hamlet's behaviour, they end in flat self-contradiction: he is "stark raving sane" (p.50).

Stoppard's play contains allusion which functions on the level of language itself. Language is of particular importance in this play for it is the most consistent dramatic device Stoppard uses in an endeavour to impose some measure of order on a world marked by unintelligibility and irrationality. Stoppard himself has characterized his dramatic use of language as a means of "withdrawing with style from chaos". "With a great deal of adroitness he uses syllogisms, paradoxes, conundrums, allusions, innuendo, the most banal but dramatically effective platitudes and a particular form of allusive incantation that underlines the sense of dread and foreboding that is a pervasive element in the play" (Combrink, 1979:188).

The most obvious allusion on this level is, of course, that of the play's title itself. Even though it derives from a single dismissive line from the end of Hamlet, it hangs over the modern play like a "memento mori":

The sight is dismal,
And our affairs from England come too late.

The ears are senseless that should give up hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfilled,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead

(V, ii. 339-343).

The way in which Stoppard alludes to Hamlet through the title of his play is again of integral importance to the total significance of Rosencrantz, for it intensifies and underlines the meaninglessness and confusion which pervade this world. Stoppard succeeds in compressing a universe of meaning in these words from Shakespeare's play and even after the courtiers' deaths and the play's end, they still seem to reverberate in our ears.

Stoppard very cleverly and cunningly exploits the difference between Shakespearean verse and modern dramatic dialogue. Throughout the play the modern phrases seem to play safe, to hold back and to evade the point at issue while the Elizabethan language takes risks, explores and discovers when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern eavesdrop on Hamlet as he broods about suicide, assuming the roles of commentators from the modern sidelines, taking refuge in the fumbblings and clichés of contemporary speech:

Nevertheless, I suppose one might say that this was a chance....One might well...accost him...Yes, it definitely looks like a chance to me....Something on the lines of a direct informal approach..man to man...straight from the shoulder....Now look here, what's it all about...sort of thing. Yes. Yes, this looks like one to be grabbed with both hands, I should say... if I were asked....No point in looking at a gift horse till you see the whites of its eyes, etcetera. (He has moved towards HAMLET but his nerve fails. He returns.) We're overawed, that's our trouble. When it comes to the point we succumb to their personality... (p.55).

Allusion on the level of language effectively creates a confrontation between Elizabethan English and the English of today. "The transitions into the modern vernacular make the twentieth century look lame, inarticulate and rather stupid in comparison with the Renaissance. But the point is made in comic terms..." (Hayman, 1977:43).

Allusive incantation can be detected clearly when Guildenstern tries to "exorcise the awareness of malignity" by chanting a desperate allusive litany throughout the course of the play:

"Give us this day our daily mask"	(p.30).
"Give us this day our daily week"	(p.34).
"Give us this day our daily round"	(p.71).
"Give us this day our daily cue"	(p.77).
"Give us this day our daily tune"	(p.86).

Stoppard employs the two words cue and tune particularly effectively as a means of underlining the increasingly unreal and contingent world his courtiers inhabit. Even their linguistic world disintegrates as they search for meaning and identity in their nightmarish world:

- Guil : Words, words. They're all we have to go on...
 Ros : Shouldn't we be doing something - constructive?
 Guil : What did you have in mind?...
 A short, blunt human pyramid... ?(p.31).

The allusions to Hamlet in Rosencrantz are so extensive as to defy full analysis of the effects created or intended.

In concluding we should keep in mind that, generally speaking, when considering Stoppard's allusion to Hamlet in Rosencrantz, there are three critical issues at stake. Firstly, one should consider what Hamlet's position is within Stoppard's play. Secondly, it is crucial to consider the similarities and differences between the roles of the courtiers in each of these plays and thirdly, also that of the question of meaning in both these plays. These issues are evidently inextricably linked and should be considered as such. Shakespeare has, once again, provided the essential foundation for a play, continuing the persistent phenomenon throughout history that writers have continually found their way to Shakespeare and made the study and use of his works an integral part of their own lives and works.

The way in which Stoppard succeeds in "clothing" scenes in which he alludes to Shakespeare with a sustained humour and farcical effects, indicates that he employs allusion not only to express admiration and honour, but also to ridicule and entertain, while simultaneously effecting a subtle criticism of Shakespeare himself and of the Elizabethan Theatre. Thus Rosencrantz attains universal significance through allusion in that it serves as dramatic criticism of Hamlet, of Elizabethan drama, and of theatrical art, and by so doing, comments on the very life that art reveals, forcing us to consider the wider context of art itself, which is, in its turn, a crucial issue in Stoppard's work in general.

Like Rosencrantz, Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth contains substantial allusion to Shakespeare. The genesis of this play illustrates Stoppard's ability to respond to opportunity: he saw that Pavel Kohout's Prague Macbeth for living-rooms could be linked with his own nonsense fifteen-minute Hamlet and a short piece written for Ed Berman, Dogg's Our Pet. The most celebrated quality of this play is its use of Dogg-language.

Hunter comments on Stoppard's intentions with the writing of Dogg's Hamlet, Cahoot's Macbeth:

...to show by this how much of the repetition is 'padding', repetition, poetic development - an affectionate dig at Shakespeare's profligate fluency, never richer than in Hamlet; to parody the cuts and compromises of amateur productions in general and school plays in particular; to parody schoolboy incomprehension of Shakespeare - to the Dogg-speaking actors the play is literally in a different language (1982:140).

In this play Stoppard once again exploits the opportunity for allusion to the full and throughout the course of the action we find ourselves witnessing the broadest possible travesty. One of the most explicit and significant examples of

allusion to Shakespeare is found in *Travesties*. The courtship between Gwendolen and Tzara actually develops through a pattern of Shakespearean allusion. Gwendolen is introduced to Tzara's method of composing a poem, which is to put all the words on separate pieces of paper in a hat and then draw them out at random one at a time. We are then presented with Tzara's version of Shakespeare's sonnet No. 18 after which Gwendolen remarks:

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord
(Faber and Faber, 1975:54).

The passage then proceeds in Shakespearean fashion:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| Tzara | : Ay, Madam. |
| Gwen | : Truly I wish the gods had made thee poetical. |
| Tzara | : I do not know what poetical is. Is it honest in word and deed? Is it a true thing? |
| Gwen | : Sure he that made us with such large discourse, looking before and after, gave us not that capability, <u>and</u> god-like reason to fust in us unused. |
| Tzara | : I was not born under a rhyming planet. Those fellows of infinite tongue that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours, they do reason themselves out again. And that would set my teeth nothing on edge - <u>nothing</u> so much as mincing poetry. |
| Gwen | : (<u>rising to his vicious edge</u>): Thy honesty and love doth mince <u>this</u> matter - Put your bonnet for his right use, 'tis for the head! (<u>sniffs away a tear</u>) I had rather than forty shilling my book of songs and sonnets here. (<u>She has turned away. He approaches with his hat offered.</u>) |
| Tzara | : (<u>gently</u>): But since he died, and poet better prove, his for his style you'll read, mine for my-love. (<u>GWEN hesitates but then takes the first slip of paper out of the hat.</u>) (p.54). |

In a somewhat whirlwind fashion, Stoppard here alludes to an assortment of Shakespearean plays: Hamlet, As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing, Henry V, Henry IV, Othello, and The Merry Wives Of Windsor.

Stoppard evidently employs allusion here partly because of the sheer exhilaration of it, and also, perhaps somewhat more significantly uses this device as an echo and enrichment of the play's meaning, a means of locating it securely within a tradition very dear to Stoppard. The importance and place of art is an integral issue in *Travesties*. He here reflects the concern of many other contemporary dramatists in that he employs allusion as a means of identifying with the structures erected by the great artists of the world, in particular those of Shakespeare, and he appears to acknowledge that these structures are inescapably a part of the contemporary world. Even if we need to demolish and

desecrate them, as is reflected by the bits of paper in Tzara's hat which are the separate words of Shakespeare's eighteenth sonnet, we cannot ignore them.

Either we regard tradition as a foundation stone on which to erect the newer glories of more recent revelation, or we see it as a stumbling block, a pile of old debris that must be blasted out of the way before the ground of experience is firm to build on again. But we cannot deal with the long tradition of artistic expression by pretending either that it did not happen or that it is of no consequence (Salmon, 1979:227).

Although only a fraction of Stoppard's allusion to Shakespeare has been analysed here, it is evident that the relationship and association between these two authors is a deep and integral one. Shakespeare gives life, substance, form and meaning to many of Stoppard's plays who, in turn, displays his respect and admiration for literature's greatest martyr.

4.4.2 Samuel Beckett: a link with the Absurd

4.4.2.1 The Theatre of the Absurd

Samuel Beckett is Stoppard's link with the Theatre of the Absurd. A great deal of Stoppard's work is actually steeped in Beckett and in the primary concerns and preoccupations of the Absurdist dramatists. These are, for example, the idea of comic lostness, gratuitous violence and aggression thinly disguised and revealed by wildly exuberant farce, and the compassion and pain one feels for and with the over-accepting "homunculi" of much Absurd drama.

Martin Esslin has pointed out that the Theatre of the Absurd can be seen as the reflection of what seems to be the attitude most genuinely representative of our own time. In addition, the hallmark of this attitude is its sense that the certitudes and unshakable basic assumptions of the past have been swept away, that they have been tested and found wanting, and that they have been discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions. Ionesco reflects on the nature of the Absurd when he says: "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose.... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (in Esslin, 1961:23).

The Theatre of the Absurd exhibits certain fundamental principles which have had an extensive influence on Stoppard's work. These are, firstly, the notions of chaos of life and the lack of order, symmetry and purpose, which are expressed through a dramatic structure also devoid of order, symmetry and purpose. Consequently, an absurd play almost always consists of a series of free-floating images, dispensing with the "traditions" of sequential plot, dialogue, action, thought, and realistic characters and settings. Secondly, absurdist playwrights frequently present us with absurdity in some concrete form, often by focusing the action of their dramas on certain objects which are a manifestation of a world which seems to run riot, beyond the control of man. A third, and ultimately significant, quality of absurd theatre is the futility of speech, and thus the inability of man to communicate with others and his failure to comprehend such plight and its consequences. Man is perceived as aiming to flatter himself that language is a force for order while, in reality, it merely adds to the prevailing chaos. As a result of this failure in communication, the loneliness of the individual is increased. Thus language is an entropic force isolating each man in a vacuum of words, leaving him as a prisoner of his own inability to communicate.

This sense of metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of the human condition is a major theme in Beckett's plays. Furthermore, the Theatre of the Absurd aims to express its sense of the senselessness of the human condition and the inadequacy of the rational approach by the open abandonment of rational devices and discursive thought.

True to the nature of the Absurd, Beckett's drama is essentially sceptical about the validity, and even the existence, of external reality: everything beyond the subjective consciousness of the individual is illusory, and even the consciousness itself may be illusory. Thus, to Beckett, life itself is illusion. Feelings fairly widely

diffused in our times lie behind his plays. Among these, the notion that "God is dead" is especially significant. This feeling evidently deprives man of the sense of a transcendental purpose in life, it inculcates a sense of the futility of life whose only object seems to be death, and it hurls man back on his own puny resources to attempt to give significance to the void left by the disappearance of God.

The central questions in Godot evidently reflect the situation of Twentieth Century Man: Didi and Gogo are still waiting at the end of the play and we wonder whom and what they are waiting for. We are struck by a sense of modern man, bound, fettered, irrationally and still primitively cruel. We wonder if his speech is unable to communicate and if he is lost because he no longer feels sure about any end or purpose. For what they once had faith in, have men now substituted their own too finite end? Do they grow aware of their own dissatisfaction through threats of their own making?

An essential characteristic of Beckett's plays is the fusion of the tragic and the comic. Godot's main statement is that "nothing is funnier than unhappiness" and this mingling of tragedy and comedy can be seen as Beckett's way of meeting the challenge of the Modern Age's new science, violence, confusion, self-alienation and sense of time as non-perfecting. Comedy and tragedy have always been equally part of human life which has never lacked joy, fun, threat or agony. All of these Beckett has interwoven in Godot.

It is important to keep in mind that in the plays of the Theatre of the Absurd, static plots prevail in that the action is no longer inherent in the plot but in the unfolding of poetic images. Thus the action is not intended to tell a story, but to communicate a pattern of poetic images. For example, in Godot, things happen but these do not constitute a plot or story. They are images of Beckett's intuition that nothing really ever happens in man's existence. The entire play is a complex poetic image made up of a complicated pattern of subsidiary images and themes which are interwoven very like those of a musical composition. This is not intended to present a line of development but to make a total, complex impression of a basic, and static, situation in the reader's mind. In this regard the Theatre of the Absurd is thus analogous to a Symbolist or Imagist poem which also presents a pattern of images and associations in a mutually interdependent structure.

Thus, basically, this Theatre seeks to express the notion that the world cannot be explained, rationalized or reduced to a particular system of values. The essential preoccupation deals with failure, dread, death and the overwhelming absurdity of man's condition and predicament. Man is faced with a frightening and illogical universe in which the essential means of communication, language, is also suspect. Hence the preoccupation of Absurdist as well as contemporary dramatists, with language as a means of inflicting some order on a confused and illogical universe. These authors aim to involve the audience in an imaginative comprehension of the dramatic situation, the seeming triviality of which masks its deeper significance and language is subsequently employed to make us constantly aware of the essential isolation and loneliness of the human condition.

Beckett shares the concern of Absurdist and contemporary dramatists with the function and nature of art in his description of the impossible function of art in the present: "The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express" (in Gilman, 1974:235).

Godot reflects a multitude of the primary characteristics of contemporary drama, including a violent mistrust of language and the use of a sequential plot which ties in with the idea of Absurdist drama not to employ the usual development of a story line. The use of a circular plot reflects the essential notion that there is no escape from the futile and hopeless human condition. A critic has remarked, wittily, that Godot is a play in which "nothing happens, twice". This may seem to be true because it tells no story but represents a basic condition or situation and the temporal notions of beginning, middle and end have no place in this play.

We can conclude with Gilman when he says:

The theatre in Beckett's hands has abandoned events, direct clashes, inquiries, representations. What remains is the theatrical impulse itself, this thrust toward the truth about our condition: that it consists in enactment, presence, the painful necessity to remain visible. 'Tell him you saw us', Didi says to Godot's messenger. To be seen, heard, by a Godot, by each other, and, in the darkness, ourselves: this is an obligation, a fate, and, finally, a story (1974:266).

4.4.2.2 Stoppard and the Absurd

Stoppard himself has acknowledged his debt to Beckett and the Theatre of the Absurd:

At the time when Godot was first done, it liberated something for anybody writing plays. It redefined the minima of theatrical validity. It was as simple as that. He got away... There we all were, busting a gut with great monologues and pyrotechnics, and this extraordinary genius just put this play together with enormous refinement, and then with two completely unprecedented and uncategorizable bursts of architecture in the middle - terrible metaphor - and there it was, theatre!... I'm an enormous admirer of Beckett...there's a Beckett joke which is the funniest joke in the world to me. It appears in various forms but it consists of confident statement followed by immediate refutation by the same voice. It's a constant process of elaborate structure and sudden - and total - dismantlement (in Hayman, 1977:6-7).

In addition, Stoppard has pointed out that Prufrock and Beckett are the "twin syringes" of his diet, his "arterial system". It is, therefore, not surprising that the very first scene of Rosencrantz calls Beckett's Godot to mind. The device Stoppard employs in order to link his plays with those of Beckett, and the Absurd, is, of course, allusion.

From the very beginning the effect of Rosencrantz resembles the Theatre of the Absurd. In the opening scene the two courtiers are betting on tossed coins which establishes their fate of waiting. As with Godot, limitless biding of time constitutes a horizontal axis of the play. The process of playing a variety of games to pass the time until something happens is strikingly similar in Stoppard and Beckett's dramas. It is evident that Stoppard's play is based on the scheme and structure of Godot as much as on that of Hamlet, and Godot is the more travestied. Stoppard alludes to Beckett as strongly as he does to Shakespeare.

Like Vladimir and Estragon, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern could be described as figures who act out their author's angst about the human condition, but, according to Hayman, Stoppard is considerably less angst-ridden than Beckett, and more inclined to take his bearings from existing literature and existing cultural trends.

Stoppard's world is not the reified one of Samuel Beckett and, despite the feeling common to many of his characters, that they have been ignored and passed by, his focus is less on the abandonment of man than the humour and perverse vitality which men generate even in despair; less on the absence of truth or its terrifying implications than its relativity... The wrenching of object from setting, of events from context, results not merely in a revealing absurdity but in a perception of the contingent nature of truth (in Vinson, 1973:737).

Rosencrantz opens with a gambling sequence which, apart from establishing the courtiers' fate of waiting, also introduces the main themes of the concern about the nature of time and about chance and intervention. As in Godot, the act of waiting is a contradictory combination of doing something and doing nothing. Although time may appear to have stopped, one is more aware of it than usual for there is no distracting action except the trivial actions of coin-tossing and idle conversation. Stoppard is alluding to Beckett very subtly here and he is attempting to acquaint himself with his unambitious characters by inverting his own unwillingness to let time pass without making headway:

Ros : ... What do you want to do?

Guil : I have no desires. None... (p.12).

Thus it is already clear that Stoppard alludes to Beckett strongly on the levels of plot (or the absence of plot?), characterization, and themes. Whereas Hamlet provides scenes in which the real action takes place, Beckett provides Stoppard with the "actionless action" which is so central to the significance of Rosencrantz.

Stoppard's two "bewildered innocents" are greatly disturbed by the uncertainty of their own roles and by the apparent meaninglessness of their lives. The strategies which they adopt in the face of this situation allude to Godot: they attempt to blot out their terror by playing language games, flipping coins, conversing, and reaching out to one another for momentary contact. They attempt to discover pattern and purpose in their existence by using scientific logic. However, all these defences crumble in that the language games lead them to real and disturbing questions about their own identity, the coins persistently and alarmingly come down heads up every time and conversation consistently drains away.

Beckett dispenses with the traditional notion of plot and, as has been pointed out, Godot does not tell a story but rather explores a situation by means of poetic images. This is evidently also applicable to Stoppard's play and in alluding to Godot so subtly, Stoppard immediately places his audience within the timeless and meaningless void within which Beckett's characters find their existence. Like Beckett's tramps, who pass the time by playing games on the open road, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are baffled characters imprisoned in a timeless void where they alternate between vaudeville routines and ruminations on the vacancy of life in general and theirs in particular. A significant difference from Godot is, however, that Stoppard's courtiers' fate is foreknown to the audience and there is no doubt as to the outcome of the situation, while, in Godot, the protagonists are perpetually waiting.

Stoppard's play clearly alludes to the circular structure of Godot. Furthermore the empty, repetitive, circular nature of life is expressed thematically. Innumerable parallels could be pointed out to reveal how consciously Stoppard has "mimed Beckett's seminal drama". As with Beckett's tramps, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern eagerly engage with characters who cross the stage in hopes that someone will tell them who they are and what is desired of them. They only vaguely remember how they got where they are and the next move is unknown to them. Thus, these "escapees" from Shakespeare's tragedy essentially mirror

the solitariness and frustration of absurd men. Guildenstern expresses the position of all those caught in the universal dilemma:

...We have not been...picked out... simply to be abandoned...set loose to find our own way...We are entitled to some direction...I would have thought (p.14).

Thus, behind the identity crises of Stoppard's courtiers lies the same metaphor as behind Beckett's tramps, viz. man is an actor in a play not wholly of his own making. Guildenstern reflects:

Wheels have been set in motion, and they have their own pace, to which we are...condemned (p.44).

Stoppard's and Beckett's characters find themselves in a similar predicament and Stoppard alludes to Godot strongly when Guildenstern says :

The only beginning is birth and the only end is death - if you can't count on that, what can you count on? (p.30).

These words are reminiscent of Pozzo's in Godot:

One day we were born, one day we'll die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? ...They gave birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more"
(Beckett in Whitfield, 1963:201).

By means of such allusions Stoppard achieves a vivid effect and succeeds in moulding his play within a tone and atmosphere true to that of the Absurd, viz. purposelessness, inevitability, monotony and hostility. On closer consideration, however, we find that Stoppard's play finds its existence in a tone which is generally lighter and more playful than that of Beckett, principally because of the manner displayed by his heroes and their response to the bewildering cosmos in which they exist. Thus, even though there are many affinities between Stoppard's play and those of other absurdist authors, Rosencrantz displays many unique qualities, indicating that Stoppard does strike out in various new directions from his absurdist base of operations.

By means of allusion to Beckett on the level of characterization, Stoppard creates the impression that the two courtiers are modern men in a Beckettian universe, incapable of action and uncertain of their identity. When we first meet them they are on an empty stage as bare as the country road where Beckett's characters do their waiting. Guildenstern, like Vladimir, is the intellectual, spinning out syllogisms, setting up tests, and working desperately in the hopes that logic or illogic will let him cut a path through the uncertainty that surrounds them. Rosencrantz, like Estragon, is a bit dense and slow to follow the turn of Guildenstern's mind. Through symbols, images, key words and allusions Stoppard conveys to us their despair and utterly hopeless situation. In both these plays the characters persistently challenge absurdity and they continually squander their energy in futile schemes to create order and sense where none exists. Again and again they are exhausted by failure. A central issue prevails: How can man live reasonably in a world that makes no sense?

Thus it is evident that the format of Rosencrantz derives, unmistakably, from absurdist drama, even though it seems to be "enlightened" with a prevailing sense of the comic. This effect is created by means of affectionate jokes towards Beckett, in other words, through allusion, such as the taking-off of belts to catch Hamlet at which Rosencrantz's trousers slide down slowly. This scene is evidently an allusion to the final scene in Godot where a suicide attempt is foiled because one belt cannot be used for hanging oneself and for holding up one's trousers at the same time. This scene itself is a slapstick comedy routine, but Stoppard, through alluding to it, employs it with deadly effect. "Nowhere is the courtiers' pathetic submission to the hostile forces surrounding them more tellingly and searingly revealed" (Combrink, 1979:191).

The allusion to the closing scene in Godot also serves to make us realize that, although the joke is cheap and laughter is invited shamelessly, this laughter is inescapable and, as it is, more poignant than tears. Stoppard thus infuses his play with the mordant humour of Samuel Beckett and it is through the interplay of allusion and suggestion that much of the rich and complex texture of Rosencrantz is derived.

Stoppard also alludes to and reflects Beckett's concern with two of the commonest yet also most disturbing of human experiences, viz. uncertainty and expectancy. Uncertainty is a disturbing experience that almost every individual has in his lifetime and which has become characteristic of the twentieth century. Expectancy, when it remains unfulfilled, becomes another form of uncertainty, and it is the transition from one to the other that constitutes what could be regarded as the "dramatic action" of Godot. These experiences of uncertainty and expectancy are evidently central to Stoppard's courtiers. Stoppard has written a play which seems to alternate continually between a search for significance and a helpless surrender to that which has been fore-ordained and irretrievably fixed.

Although Stoppard's plays frequently appear to be inherently absurdist, he has evidently extended the limits of absurdity in that he dramatizes the outside world concretely, as part of a recognizable social system. In addition, some of his plays, such as Travesties and Jumpers, contain characters who are not resigned to absurdity but are determined to battle against such a vision of the world. Stoppard ultimately presents man with a greater sense of dignity than true absurd drama in that most of his characters are struggling, not surrendering. Although they are aware of absurdity, they do not resign themselves to it.

Thus Stoppard has not left man in the absurdist void, and almost always presents man's predicament comically, emphasizing the need for some action other than surrender to counteract absurdity.

When we consider Stoppard's use of the basic principles of absurd drama we find that, firstly, he makes free use of form which include linear movements, flash-backs, plots-within-plots, and innumerable allusions to other literary works. Yet, from all this a distinctly perceivable structure emerges. Secondly, Stoppard's emphasis on the variety of language in terms of brisk pace, literary allusions, and double and triple meanings appears to reaffirm his own belief in man's ability to communicate. Thirdly, he maintains and exhibits an integral

concern for humanity, with the result that even though his characters may be lost figures, they are never turned into the one-dimensional characters of standard absurd drama. Thus, ultimately, his plays may be understood as an affirmation of man's humanity in the face of all obstacles.

Because of his subtle and extremely effective use of allusion, quotation and borrowings, many critics have been unwilling to commit themselves to a judgment of Stoppard's work. However, Robert Brustein claims that Rosencrantz's insights are prefabricated, its pessimism unfelt, its philosophical implications spurious, its tone cute, and its main characters whimsical to the point of nausea. This view seems to be somewhat limited when considering the ingenious manner in which Stoppard gives his play zest and liveliness by means of allusion. Moreover, this play seems to offer us, paradoxically, a certain measure of clarity and intellectual substance, rather than the shadows and mystery we find in Hamlet or the immense pressure of life's absurdity we find in Godot.

Rosencrantz is ultimately witty, bright and lively, and seeing that it feeds upon, in other words alludes to, both Elizabethan Tragedy and the Theatre of the Absurd, it provides us with the opportunity to consider the larger context of modern drama as it exemplifies and portrays the prevailing issues of twentieth-century life itself.

Stoppard's connection with Shakespeare and Beckett is certainly a means of refuting the general notion that he is a prodigy whose productions do little more than glitter at the surface. Moreover, his association with these authors is a significant reflection of the respect and concern the contemporary age still holds for its cultural heritage.

4.4.3 Oscar Wilde: a vanished elegance

Travesties is Stoppard at his most verbally dazzling, and the ... play as a whole is brim-full (some might say overflowing) with puns of all manner and description, ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime, from the groaningly obvious to the diabolically subtle. And however many one thinks one has detected, there are always others somewhere in the shadows; rereading a Stoppard text means constantly being startled by fresh discoveries (Zeifman in Brown, 1984:85-86).

These comments by Zeifman effectively illustrate the complexity and sheer brilliance of Stoppard's use of allusion. Reading a Stoppard play is, in fact, an exhilarating experience and the overall effect of a play such as Travesties appears to be that of being passed from player to player, from conviction to opposite conviction, from mode to mode and from allusion to allusion.

The allusions and travesties in this play are ultimately exuberant and inventive, strikingly marked by a distinctive verbal elegance which immediately reminds one of Oscar Wilde. Moreover, the Wildean element in Travesties irrevocably evokes a sense of a vanished elegance. Stoppard is evidently obsessed with

allusion but, as we have seen, he does not merely employ this device as a means of entertainment or to amuse, but carefully and deliberately as a structural device and as an integral part of the basic meaning of the play. Thus, patterns of language, and in particular, allusions, mirror content in Stoppard's dramas.

The Importance of Being Earnest acts as a "host-play" in Travesties. It is a comic masterpiece that appears to revel in its own improbability and absurdity, consistently farcical in tone, characterization and plot. Watson comments that "comedy here seems to have created a world all of its own; when we look closer, we see our own world, after all, through the irreverent gaiety of an iconoclastic mind. The line from Wilde to Shaw is clear; and after Shaw, perhaps only Tom Stoppard in contemporary times has come near Wilde's marvellous verbal dexterity" (1983:111).

In Travesties Stoppard shares with Wilde a brilliance of dialogue and idiosyncratic technique of orchestrating conversation. Both these authors handle the seemingly desultory chatter of groups of people with delicate skill, counterpointing one style with another, hinting through ironic contrasts and telling silences as well as through fluent epigrams and jokes.

Although Travesties contains practically no direct quotations from Wilde's play, he "borrows" characters and whole episodes from The Importance of Being Earnest, through which Stoppard demonstrates his belief that this play has entered the collective unconscious almost in the same way as Shakespeare's masterpiece he alludes to in Rosencrantz. Thus Travesties is, from beginning to end, a piece of Wildean play on the relation between life and art in which everyone is juggling roles: Carr, who is never really in the play he thinks he is in, the Dadaist proclaiming, "Pleasure, pleasure", the girls who enact the tea-party scene line for line as if they did not know they were playing it, the ideal butler who turns out to be a secret Leninist and James Joyce playing an Irish comedian version of the real James Joyce who played in The Importance of Being Earnest in Zurich in 1917.

The echoes, suggestions, allusions and parallels in Travesties are intricate and are often employed in order to develop and express subject-matter. One of the main subjects in this play is a conflict of style which is, ultimately, explored by means of allusion and travesty. Thus we find that Wilde enters Stoppard's play through style and substance and through the deliberate evocation of Wilde's drawing-room world of high wit, Stoppard mirrors his own conception of art as play.

In Travesties Stoppard once again employs allusions on various levels with various purposes in mind. Firstly, he uses Wilde's play as a skeletal structure. "The tantalizing sense, in Wilde's farces or in the melodrama of his more serious pieces, that some important ideas are lurking there makes it the more appropriate to use the scheme of his most popular play as the basis for Travesties, especially as it is hardly less familiar to audiences than Hamlet and is likely to be known almost by heart by the theatre people" (Hunter, 1982:143). Apart from "using" Wilde's play, the primary sources for the rest of Travesties are James Joyce's Ulysses and the documented excesses of Dada, in Act One, and Lenin's biography in Act Two.

Stoppard's play is, in reality, a travesty of The Importance of Being Earnest with Carr as Algernon, Tzara as Jack, and Joyce as Lady Bracknell. For Stoppard the literary mode of travesty is simultaneously amusing and serious. The term travesty derives from the term "trans-vestire" which means "to change clothes" and ultimately it is meant to "disguise" characters, functioning as a staple comic device in that the audience, as well as the characters, are involved in a game of guessing who is who. According to Coppélia Kahn, travesty, in the literary sense, means to clothe a character or situation from a known literary work in the "dress" or style that specifically makes it ridiculous or grotesque and debases it. The game-like or play element is retained, for the reader or audience must guess what author, style or genre is being travestied in order to get to the comic point. Thus, traditionally, travesty and allusion are essentially comic devices.

Thus it is evident that the title of Stoppard's play is of particular significance and is certainly an appropriate one, for Stoppard, through Henry Carr, presents a travesty of both literary styles and historical events. Already in the prologue of Travesties Stoppard illustrates his ability to use allusion very effectively for various purposes. The prologue can be viewed as an entire Stoppard play in miniature. Through using allusion on the level of characterization, Stoppard is able to explore ideas which are central to the play itself, viz. the conflict of style and the nature of art and the artist. He has created a clever theatrical equation between Tristan Tzara and Jack Worthing. Bennet informs us that a Mr Tzara has left his card and that he is an artist. Subsequently, Carr administers a Wildean reproof:

I will not have you passing moral judgements on my friends. If
Mr Tzara is an artist that is his misfortune (1975:31).

Soon Tzara presents himself, announcing, in an outrageous Roumanian accent that he wants to marry Henry's sister Gwendolen. After a time slip he makes the same entrance ten minutes later, this time without the accent. The ensuing conversation is a pastiche of Wilde peppered with good Stoppardian puns and new variations on the old theme of accidents and causality:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Tzara | : Eating and drinking, as usual, I see, Henry? I have often observed that Stoical principles are more easily borne by those of Epicurean habits. |
| Carr | : (stiffly): I believe it is done to drink a glass of hock and seltzer before luncheon, and it is well done to drink it well before luncheon. I took to drinking hock and seltzer for my nerves at a time when nerves were fashionable in good society. This season it is trenchfoot, but I drink it regardless because I feel much better after it. |
| Tzara | : You might have felt much better anyway. |
| Carr | : No, no - post hock, propter hock. |
| Tzara | : But, my dear Henry, causality, is no longer fashionable owing to the war. |
| Carr | : How illogical, since the war itself had causes. I forget what they were, but it was in all the papers at the time (p.36). |

When considering Stoppard's use of language in Travesties we find that he also alludes to Wilde on this level. In this play, as the title promises, dialogue itself is travestied by the hyper-verbal duets in which the characters collide: collisions of pastiche. Travesties is, however, not content to use only Wildean pastiche as the "new material" of its dialogue, it also swallows up Joycean parody, Tzara's Dadaist language, Shakespearean fragments and Lenin's speeches. In addition, the ingenuous double distancing whereby The Importance of Being Earnest is performed, as it were, in the erratic memory of old Carr, allows almost any shift and combination of style and language. Since Joyce and Tzara are thoroughly theatricalized as they appear in Carr's memory within the rewritten framework of Wilde's play, the dialogue assumes the appearance of a chain of parodic variations.

Stoppard frequently is seen to relish rhetoric and expressive language. In Travesties he borrows Wilde's fluent elegance for many un-Wildean statements. At times the characters' statements almost seem to "grate and clatter" within a Wildean elegance as is illustrated when Carr says:

... Bennett seems to be showing alarming signs of irony. I have always found that irony among the lower orders is the first sign of an awakening social consciousness. It remains to be seen whether it will grow into an armed seizure of the means of production, distribution and exchange, or spend itself in liberal journalism (p.32).

Wilde has expressed the thought that to arrive at what one really believes one must speak through lips different from one's own, which is very true of Stoppard himself. In using The Importance of Being Earnest as the backbone of his play, Stoppard achieves hilarious effects. Moreover, it sets a standard of theatrical elegance, partly in the Wildean patter itself and partly in enabling the dramatist to alternate abruptly between high seriousness and familiar travesty.

One of the most prominent and vivid effects Stoppard achieves by means of allusion is that of dislocation and confusion. Travesties seems to assume the appearance of a matrix with, on the one hand, the characters such as Joyce and Tzara who are subjected to travesty continually and, on the other hand, the character of Lenin, who remains stolidly detached. He is the only character who is not controlled by Carr's distorting imagination which could be interpreted as a comment on the nature of the difference between the artist and the social revolutionary and this evidently has a dislocating effect on the play. This effect is, in turn, intensified by the stylistic variation which is achieved mainly by means of the use of allusion. Moreover, this phenomenon allows Stoppard the freedom to criticize and travesty as he wishes.

Stoppard clearly shares Wilde's concern about style. The latter preached the pursuit of beauty, style, the utterly gratuitous, and the potentially outrageous. Stoppard seems, in turn, to pursue and allude to Wilde in an endeavour to recapture a vanished elegance, a phenomenon closely associated with many contemporary dramatists' intense nostalgia for a lost past. In the closing moments of Travesties Bennet informs us that "all the Perrier-jouet, Brut '89 is gone", a notion which significantly, makes a succinct summary of the passing of the old elegance and reflects upon one of Stoppard's main concerns in this play.

Wilde has indeed enabled him to draw a certain zest and power from a past elegance.

4.4.4 James Joyce and Ulysses: A Landmark in the hinterland of Stoppard's playwrighting

Together with Shakespeare, Beckett, Wilde and Eliot, Joyce is part of a group of authors with whom Stoppard associates intensely and extensively. As writers, Joyce and Stoppard have much in common, particularly in terms of their affinity for travesty, parody and allusion, and their integral belief in comedy as the supreme form of art.

In Travesties Stoppard alludes to Joyce continually in that he employs Joyce as a main character in his play and frequently refers to Joyce's masterpiece Ulysses, which is, in its turn, an extensive study of parody and allusion. In Stoppard's play, Joyce represents the renewal of art at a deeply mystical level. Lenin, Tzara and Joyce are at irreconcilable odds with one another and between them they manage to reflect all the prevalent twentieth-century attitudes to the arts. Joyce represents one of the integral ideas of the play, viz. that art is the reflection of man's inner sense of things and is, of all human activities, ultimately the most significant. In addition, it is a continuing and cumulative human expression in which the individual artist's contribution is important, thus artists are part of one another.

Allusion in Travesties adds a measure of complexity to an already complex play. As its title suggests, not only does it contain various travesties and parodies, but those texts parodied and alluded to are in themselves parodies and allusive masterpieces. This is particularly true of Ulysses. Joyce's use of allusion in this novel is evidently marked by its extent and thoroughness. It involves innumerable allusions, all continually intersecting, modifying and qualifying each other. Furthermore, Ulysses is celebratory and innovatively comic and in showing all ages in one thus uniting various stylistic viewpoints, it is technically and psychologically integrative and releasing.

Both Stoppard and Joyce display an inherent and palpable awareness of human life as permanently and undeniably comic, however sad and bitter it might appear to be in the short view. In addition, they both pervade their work with a greatness of buoyancy in spirit and form. Looking back down the ages in Ulysses, Joyce sees that all periods have been tragedies for the man who feels and comedies for the man who thinks.

Stoppard is undeniably distanced from true Absurdist authors mainly as a result of the sincere compassion he exhibits in many of his plays. In this respect, he is far closer to Joyce who, particularly in Ulysses, displays a distinct sense of wisdom and compassion in addition to a tangible measure of sympathy for human nature. In addition, the main comic method of Ulysses, viz. "...to blow up still further the swollen bladder of human pretentiousness and self-deception till it bursts in laughter, and we are left with the pea in the middle", inevitably reminds one of Stoppard's methods (Rodway, 1975:256).

As has already been mentioned, both these authors display an inherent concern with and awareness of the comic. Subsequently, *Ulysses* has frequently been referred to as "the complete comedy" mainly because it uses every mood and every means known to comic literature. In addition, its allusion and symbolic structure universalise the local and temporal content, the stylistic range and validity gives the apparent drabness of the contents a celebratory comic vitality, and the depth and unflinching detail of character can only be matched by the very best of authors.

Stoppard's association with Joyce is ultimately based on parallels of interest and concern, mainly with regard to the complexity of modern life. They share a deep awareness of issues such as humanity seen as essentially pretentious, absurd, and full of frailties, and, at times, bigoted and brutal, and human existence which is seen to be inevitably permeated with sorrow and suffering. Then again, there are essential differences in their attitudes and concerns; for example, Joyce appears to conclude that certain values really are better than others, though they may be man-made and not God-given, whereas Stoppard seems to distance himself from humanity, concerned with the philosophical problems underlying the human ones. Thus we arrive at Stoppard's very essence as a writer: he has crystallised the modern writer's incertitude into the distinct recognition that there is a problem of knowledge, perhaps insoluble. He is a genuine, thoughtful "don't know" of a human temperament. Unlike Joyce, who answers a definite "yes" to life, Stoppard seems to prefer "perhaps" as his last word.

In addition to the issues mentioned thus far, Stoppard and Joyce share a delight and fascination with language. Both appear to accept language as a field of mental play, an intrinsic delight. It is therefore not surprising to find a distinct allusion to Joyce at the end of one of Stoppard's best plays: *Jumpers*. The almost incomprehensible Joycean speech at the close of this play reads:

Indeed, if mood mad herd instinct, if God dad the inference? - to take another point: If goons in mood, by Gad is sin different or banned good, fr' instance? - thirdly: out of the ether, random nucleic acid tests or neither universa vice, to name but one... (1972:83).

To both these authors language is, in effect, a living thing, and to Stoppard ultimately, a means of imposing some sense of order upon a confused and bewildered humanity. In addition, Stoppard and Joyce resemble one another in their use of allusion. For example, in employing various other authors' use of language allusively, they can function simultaneously outside and inside the language, without being its victim. Thus they share contemporary dramatists' endeavour to reinvest language with its incantatory, illusionist and creative power.

Thus it is clear that Stoppard shares a special and integral allusive association with Joyce and we can agree with Hunter when he says:

Stoppard may have learned from Joyce that it is possible to make travesty which does not diminish either the original or the contemporary. He may also have learned that allusion can cheerfully include both the grandest and the most trivial material:

Hamlet (again!) repeatedly crops up in Ulysses, but so do pop tunes from Italian opera, erotic novelettes, trash journalism and pornographic postcards. ... Stoppard does not refer closely to Joyce's book...but it is one of the landmarks in the hinterland of his writing, a landmark of comedy, verbal ingenuity, and travesty, but above all of aesthetic commitment of the kind Stoppard is fifty-one percent against but also forty- nine percent in favour of (1982:145-146).

4.5 The usefulness of allusion as a functional literary device

Allusion is ultimately an extremely functional and complex device considering that it is basically employed in order to activate two texts simultaneously. Part of its complexity derives from the fact that all allusion shares a common base, viz. reference, but can differ greatly with regard to purpose, function and effect.

No matter where an allusion is found, the basic process of actualizing this allusion remains the same: it starts with the recognition of a marker and ends with intertextual patterning. A text can, however, be read and appreciated without the reader actualizing the allusion.

An allusion which has been actualized evidently enriches interpretation and amplifies the text in which it is manipulated, indicating the remarkable versatility and multifariousness of allusion as a dramatic device, in that it can be employed in order to enhance and clarify thematic patterns, characterization, feelings, structure and so forth. Whether allusions appear concentrated or dispersed, they provide elements which can be linked together in unpredictable intertextual patterns which, in turn, lead to the reconstruction of a fuller and richer text. Consequently, allusion is closely associated with the concepts of intertextuality, repetition, decodification and deconstruction.

The whole of literature appears to have assumed the appearance of an infinite network of allusion. This dramatic device is employed continually and extensively mainly because of the vast multitude of purposes it serves: it exhibits great transmuting power, enriches the common idiom, provides both language and literature with a tangible vitality, is an extremely effective means of communication, and the reader's enjoyment and appreciation of literature is ultimately enhanced by the recognition and actualization of allusions, which, in turn, enlivens and invigorates the reader's involvement in literature.

Allusion provides the modern text with continuity through its association with tradition and the grandeur of the literary past. Thus a strong ancestral presence is activated through allusion. This literary device displays amazing capability in that it provides the author with power and a significant ability aimed at achieving poignancy, and enlivening and enhancing the writer's verbal power almost simultaneously. Allusion is ultimately magnetic and explosive, reflecting its transcendent nature through the fact that it possesses the adopted work's entire contextuality.

Allusion is frequently perceived to be a distinct part of the creative style of various authors, at the same time establishing the idiosyncrasy and genius of the author. Thus it is the grid and foundation of many great works of literature. An interesting and significant aspect of allusion is the fact that authors do not allude only to literature, but also to other forms of art such as music and painting. Such allusions are, however, problematic in that they involve a "translation" of the work alluded to into the "language" of the alluding work. Once this is done there appears to be no essential difference seeing that the structure of the allusion, its potential functions and the process of actualization are evidently identical.

It has been pointed out that in order for allusion to take place at all, one text has to precede another and that an allusion is frequently unintelligible without prior knowledge of its former context, with the result that this allusion is sometimes syntactically and logically awkward in its new context. It is my view, however, that allusion can function effectively and functionally, regardless of the context in which it is employed, depending, of course, on the allusive ability of the particular author. The list of functions and purposes attained by allusion is seemingly endless and does away with the notion that it is primarily and merely a form of parasitism.

Allusion provides universality and reinforces meaning, feeling, themes, character and so forth. It can be employed in order to suggest or replace attitudes and enables the author to refer to something subtly and discreetly while still making full use of the multiple associations and implications allusion carries with it. Thus allusion serves the purposes of understatement and euphemism and displays close association with irony and ambiguity. It can be used as a means of evasion, thereby avoiding unpleasant statements and feelings, thus attaining the appearance of a technique of suggestion and implication.

Allusion ultimately flatters by implication the audience's erudition and breadth of reading and leads to mystification followed by the pleasure of recognition and discovery. This recognition ultimately leads to a keener perception of the literary work in its entirety. In addition, allusion appears to fill a basic need for expression, simultaneously expanding, and assisting in defining, the symbolic side of characters and situations.

All of literature has assumed the appearance of an allusive textual chain from which there is no escape. Allusion can be visual or verbal. Allusive gestures are ultimately employed in order to express atmosphere, feelings, emotions and thoughts. The effect of both visual and verbal allusion is usually twofold, viz. that a parallel of some kind is evoked, thus fulfilling a specific function in the immediate context in which it is used and that separate allusions usually combine in order to form implications which suggest and enhance certain qualities of the world of the play. These allusive chains ultimately enrich the basic significance and meaning of the particular literary work, simultaneously adding to a sense of mystery and sharpening the audience's interest. Subsequently, allusion is also a unique and extremely effective technique of compression.

Allusion thus displays remarkable versatility and significance as a dramatic device and the phenomena of allusion and imitation obviously cover an extremely wide field.

Allusion in Stoppard is ultimately exuberant and inventive and is marked by a distinctive verbal elegance. In his plays, as in most others, allusion mirrors content and is often deliberately employed as a structural device, thus forming part of the play's basic meaning. Stoppard consistently maintains his idiosyncratic technique of orchestrating both conversation and allusion, and he frequently displays magician-like qualities in his ability to employ allusion functionally and effectively. This characteristic of his work reveals his remarkable technical skill while simultaneously linking him to a past tradition of great authors.

Stoppard's real literariness is his allusiveness and, subsequently, the audience has to share a certain cultural background with the author in order properly to appreciate the distinctive wit and humour of his plays. Stoppard evidently employs allusion as a comic device while travestying and parodying the great works of literature - as well as insignificant pop songs. Thus his extensive use of allusion permeates his plays with an almost palpable a sense of vitality and liveliness.

Although Stoppard is fond of travestying and alluding to great authors, these allusions frequently reveal that his clowning and laughter are not heartless but are associated with consistent and serious concerns. Furthermore, his allusion and reference to authors such as Shakespeare, Beckett, Wilde and Joyce display a remarkable confidence and self-assuredness.

Allusion is the lifeblood of Stoppard's plays, saturating them with a pulsating and reverberating vivacity. Through allusion, Stoppard extends the frontiers of his world beyond the immediate, enabling us to interpret life itself more adequately. Subsequently, it often contributes to the dramatic effectiveness of both the playwright's general intention and the play itself.

When one views Stoppard's use of allusion in general it becomes clear that it serves simultaneously as a passport to a certain freedom and as a means of relying upon and associating with the literary grandeur and tradition of the past. Above all, allusion is Stoppard's intrinsic mode of communicating. His plays provide, to the erudite reader, a scintillating communicative experience - they are indeed a labyrinth of communication, devious, intriguing and tantalizing at the inner core, at once deflating and heartwarming fulfilling.

5 STOPPARD AND COMMUNICATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: A RECAPITULATION

To Stoppard, playwrighting constitutes an infinitely extended means of communicating with his audience. It emerges that the three main areas within this communicative process are those pertaining to comedy and farce, the Absurd and allusive usage of language.

Stoppard's plays compose a significant part of contemporary comedy in that they reflect inherently contemporary concerns including the elements of irony, incongruity, an integrally bleak and forlorn tone, an overriding though elegantly fastidious intellectual appeal, the ultimate and, indeed, essential loss of faith, a clearly detectable sense of compassion which effectively mitigates the suffocating awareness of limitation and imperfection which demands acceptance, integration and redemption, and laughter marked by hysteria and anxiety.

Stoppard shares his integral concern with language as an inadequate instrument in the process of communication with other modern dramatists, including Pinter, Gray and Nichols. An insistent notion which arises from a survey of contemporary comedy is that language remains suspect as an efficient means of communication in a threatening and overwhelmingly inimical world. Even the possibility of communication itself is questionable since language emerges as the ultimate entropic force which both obscures and reveals truth in the process of communication. Thus it emerges that modern playwrights frequently attempt to find new and, ideally, more effective ways of communicating, including "new" forms of comedy which should be a vehicle for the expression of those thoughts and notions which arise from the core of a modern society. Within the context of contemporary comedy catharsis is ultimately viewed as the essential communicative component between art and the recipient although both the cause and target of laughter have shifted drastically in modern times.

Within Pinter's plays we find that characters communicate fairly effectively, although not always on the surface level. He maintains the notion that language is in effect essentially a form of non-communication, thus portraying a deliberate evasion of communication in his plays. In his turn, Gray employs language in order to confuse, unsettle and disorientate. Like Stoppard, he is fond of using a circular structure which traps his characters: there is no escape from the non-communicative world in which they battle to find meaningful existence. Subsequently, laughter emerges as a means of coming to terms with the despair and disillusionment with which these characters continually have to cope.

Although Stoppard joins his contemporaries in their portrayal of language as an ineffectual means of communication, he does tend to move away from this notion, especially in a play such as Jumpers in which he poses the question of how man can survive under hostile conditions. To him, language is a means of "withdrawing with style from chaos". His characters are ultimately seen as refusing to submit meekly to absurdity, which reflects Stoppard's essentially

compassionate view of mankind. To Stoppard, "perhaps" is the final word when answering to life.

It has been determined that allusion is an undeniably functional device which constitutes the driving force behind Stoppard's impetus as a playwright. Allusion has frequently proved to be essentially indispensable within the process of communication in modern times. Viewed as a whole, the entire process involved in allusion assumes the appearance of a palimpsest. This implies an author's use of an already existing macrotext, for example Stoppard's use of Hamlet in Rosencrantz. It is left to the audience to decipher whatever lurks beneath the surface of Stoppard's play, as has frequently been the case with ancient palimpsests. This brings one to the realization why it has been remarked that every new reading of a Stoppard text leads to fresh and startling discoveries: no one reading alone can reveal what has partially been buried under the surface of a palimpsest. The experience of reading a Stoppard play thus assumes the nature of an adventure and a challenge, marked by essential tension and delight on the part of the receptor.

The fact that various methods can be employed in order to decipher a palimpsest implies that when reading a Stoppard text, various methods of analysis of different elements can be used in order to come to some conclusion as to what his plays attempt to communicate. This, in its turn, ties in with the notion of reception theory: no two readers will derive the same stimulus or response from reading the same text, thus giving rise to an immense variety in critical response to one particular play. Such a view once and for all rejects the notion that Stoppard's work is derivative and draws too heavily upon the works of other authors.

The notion of a text resembling a palimpsest can be linked to that of intertextuality in that one text has, in reality, through allusion, been "transformed" or "imitated" in order to give form to an entirely new text. Stoppard's plays derive their power from this phenomenon: they are based on an already existing macrotext and depend on the notion of hypertextuality.

From the Absurd, Stoppard derives his preoccupation with the notions of uncertainty, the loss of identity, the search for meaning and significance and the endless struggle in communication. These concepts are ultimately expressed through a dramatic structure also devoid of order and purpose, through a variety of themes dealing with essentially contemporary concerns, and through an idiosyncratic use of dramatic language which includes an intense mental absorption of the element of allusion. The world of Stoppard's plays is beyond the control of man who is perceived as pathetically aiming to employ language as a force for order while, with obstinate consistency, it adds to the prevailing chaos. His work is a fusion of the tragic and comic although his ultimate view of mankind is shot through with compassion.

Stoppard has distinguished himself as an eminent contemporary playwright who is essentially concerned with man's finite, though inescapable, existence in a world perceived to be hostile and menacing. In an attempt to communicate this concern with his audience he employs various communicative dramatic devices including those related to comedy, the Absurd and allusive usage of language. Stoppard deserves his place of eminence amongst the foremost contemporary

playwrights and we could certainly allow ourselves to admire him without reserve: Stoppard's plays are indeed a labyrinth of communication, for which, to literary tradition, interpretive astuteness and flashes of intuition may provide a map, while one is irresistibly aware that the core will remain elusive, yet tantalizing.

SUMMARY

Tom Stoppard emerges from a survey of critical responses to his work as a playwright simultaneously hailed as one of the most significant and influential contemporary playwrights and regarded as a derivative and too intellectual and technical author.

This study is an attempt to determine how Stoppard employs his plays in an attempt to communicate with his audience. Communication itself emerges as a key-concept within a hostile and menacing world. It is revealed that comedy, allusion and the Absurd constitute three of the main elements employed in the process of communication within the domain of Stoppard's plays.

Comedy is, in essence, a genre which lends itself to the needs and notions of modern man frequently struggling to survive in a world marked by insensitivity and disillusionment. Stoppard's plays constitute a significant part of the domain of contemporary comedy.

Stoppard's connection with the Theatre of the Absurd remains undisputed. His plays reveal a distinct preoccupation with the Absurdist notions of uncertainty, the loss of identity, the search for meaning and significance and the futile, though endless, struggle in communication. These notions are essentially expressed through a dramatic structure marked by an absence of purpose and order, through a variety of themes concerned with distinctly contemporary concerns and through the idiosyncratic use of dramatic language which includes a wide-ranging usage of allusion.

Allusion itself remains an undeniably useful and functional device and is developed to its fullest by Stoppard. It thus emerges as the sole element which constitutes the playwright's driving force. All his plays find their existence most properly within the manipulation and development of this all-encompassing element of dramatic language. An interesting and relevant notion which arises from a survey of the use of allusion is that the entire process involved in allusion assumes the appearance of a palimpsest. This implies an author's use of an already existing macrotext, as is the case with Stoppard's use of *Hamlet* in *Rosencrantz*. This notion can, in addition, be linked to those of intertextuality and communication, which are, in their turn, both concepts of integral significance within the domain of contemporary drama.

An overriding notion which arises from a survey of contemporary comedy is that language remains suspect as an efficient means of communication in a threatening and overwhelmingly inimical world. Even the possibility of communication itself is questionable since language emerges as the ultimate entropic force which both obscures and reveals truth in the process of communication. Thus it is revealed that modern playwrights frequently attempt to find new and more effective ways of communication, including "new" forms of comedy which should, ideally, be a vehicle for the expression of those thoughts and notions which arise from the core of a modern society. Within the context of contemporary comedy catharsis is ultimately seen as the essential

communicative component between art and the recipient although both the cause and target of laughter have shifted drastically in modern times.

Stoppard shares certain essential qualities integral to modern comedy as a whole with other contemporary playwrights including Pinter, Gray and Nichols. Within the context of contemporary comedy, language has evidently assumed a new significance. It has essentially become a form of non-communication while, in modern comedy, communication itself, somewhat paradoxically, is effected through silence. Thus language emerges as an offensive weapon, an alienating and dislocating device. It is ultimately employed both to link and divide disorientated and unsettled characters within a hostile universe.

This study has thus resolved itself in the following manner:

- a) A concise survey of relevant Stoppard criticism which reveals three crucial areas of critical concern, viz.
 - i) Stoppard's use of comedy
 - ii) his connection with the Absurd and
 - iii) his remarkably functional use of the device of allusion.
- b) It emerges that these elements are mainly employed by the playwright in order to communicate with his audience, a concept which forms the overriding notion upon which this entire study is based.

OPSOMMING

Uit 'n opname van kritiese beskouings oor sy werk sien ons dat Tom Stoppard gelyktydig beskou word as een van die invloedrykste moderne dramaturge en as 'n derivatiewe en 'n veels te intellektuele en tegniese dramaturg.

Hierdie studie is dan 'n poging om te bepaal hoe Stoppard sy dramas gebruik om te kommunikeer met sy gehoor. Kommunikasie op sigself kan beskou word as 'n sentrale konsep binne 'n vyandige wêreld. Dit is duidelik dat komedie, verwysing en die Absurde drie elemente van integrale belang is in die proses van kommunikasie binne die raamwerk van Stoppard se dramas.

Stoppard se assosiasie met die Absurde Teater bly onmiskenbaar. Sy dramas is 'n bewys van 'n preokkupasie met die konsepte van onsekerheid, die afwesigheid van identiteit, die soeke na betekenis en die nuttelose, dog eindelose, soeke na betekenisvolle kommunikasie. Hierdie konsepte word uitgedruk deur 'n dramatiese struktuur wat gekenmerk word deur 'n afwesigheid van doel en orde, deur 'n variasie van temas wat handel oor uitsluitlik hedendaagse belange en deur 'n idiosinkratiese dramatiese taalgebruik wat 'n intense geestelike absorpsie van verwysing insluit.

Verwysing is 'n onmiskenbare funksionele element binne die raamwerk van die literatuur en word ten volle deur Stoppard ontplooi en ontwikkel. Dit kan beskou word as die dramaturg se dryfveer. Al sy dramas vind hul bestaan binne die manipulasie en ontwikkeling van hierdie allesomvattende element van dramatiese taalgebruik.

'n Interessante en relevante konsep wat voortspruit uit 'n studie van verwysing in die literatuur is dat die proses van verwysing die gedaante van 'n palimpses aanneem. Dit suggereer die gebruik van 'n reeds bestaande makroteks soos in die geval van Stoppard se gebruik van Hamlet in Rosencrantz. Hierdie konsep kan verbind word met die van intertekstualiteit en kommunikasie wat in sigself sleutelkonsepte binne die raamwerk van moderne drama is.

'n Allesomvattende konsep wat voortspruit uit 'n studie van moderne drama is dat taalgebruik op sigself gewantou word as 'n effektiewe middel tot kommunikasie. Selfs die moontlikheid van kommunikasie word bevraagteken omdat taal self beskou word as 'n vyandige element wat gelyktydig die waarheid ontplooi en verdoesel binne die kommunikasieproses. Dit word dus duidelik dat moderne dramaturge deurgaans 'n poging aanwend om nuwe en effektiewer vorme van kommunikasie te vind. Dit sluit "nuwe" vorme van komedie in wat, ideaal gesproke, 'n vorm van uitdrukking van die idees en gedagtes wat voortspruit uit die kern van 'n moderne samelewing behoort te wees. Katarsis word binne die konteks van moderne drama gesien as 'n essensiële element in die kommunikasieproses tussen die kuns en die ontvanger, al het beide die oorsaak en die teiken van die komiese drasties in die moderne tyd verander.

Saam met moderne dramaturge soos Pinter, Gray en Nichols, is Stoppard intens geïnteresseerd in elemente wat die kern van moderne drama uitmaak. Binne die konteks van hierdie drama vind ons dat taalgebruik in sigself opnuut met entoesiasme bejeën moet word. Dit kan beskou word as 'n vorm van

non-kommunikasie terwyl kommunikasie self, in moderne drama, plaasvind deur middel van stilte. Dus neem taalgebruik die vorm van 'n vyandige wapen aan en word dit merendeels gebruik om onsekere en verwarde karakters terselfdertyd met mekaar te verbind en van mekaar te vervreem.

Hierdie studie het dus die volgende vorm aangeneem:

- a) 'n Oorsig van relevante kritiek ten opsigte van Stoppard se dramas wat in sigself drie areas van belang ontplooi, naamlik
 - i) Stoppard se gebruik van die komedie-genre
 - ii) sy assosiasie met die "Absurde" en
 - iii) sy merkwaardige funksionele gebruik van verwysing.
- b) Die sentrale konsep wat dus na vore tree is die gedagte dat hierdie elemente deur die dramaturg gebruik word in 'n poging om met sy gehoor te kommunikeer, 'n konsep wat in sigself die sentrale gedagte uitmaak waarop hierdie studie in sy geheel gebasseer is.

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