

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

MINISTÈRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

ⵎⵓⵍⵓⵔ ⵎⵎⵎⵔ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵏⵓⵣ

ⵏⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵏⵓⵣ ⵏ ⵏⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵏⵓⵣ ⵏ ⵏⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵏⵓⵣ

ⵏⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵏⵓⵣ ⵏ ⵏⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵏⵓⵣ

MOULOUDMAMMERRI UNIVERSITY OF TIZI-OUZOU

FACULTY OF LETTERS & LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



جامعة مولود معمري - تيزي وزو

كلية الآداب واللغات

قسم الإنجليزية

Item Number:

Serial Number:

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

For the degree of Master in English

FIELD: Foreign Languages

SUBJECT: English

SPECIALISM: Literature and Civilization

Title

**Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602):
Intertextual Dialogic Relation.**

Presented by:

-BENSAID Fazia

Supervised by:

ABDELLI Fatima

Board of Examiners:

FERHI Samir, MCB , Mouloud MAAMERI University, chair ;

ABDELLI Fatima , MAA , Mouloud MAAMERI University, Supervisor ;

DJELLOUT Mekioussa, MAB, Mouloud MAAMERI University, Examiner ;

Cohort: December, 2020

To the memory of my dear Grandma

To my sweet and loving father and mother

To my dear brothers and sisters

To my lovely nephews and nieces

To my Friends

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank God almighty for giving me the strength and the patience to finish this dissertation.

I would also like to express my special thanks and gratitude to my teacher and supervisor Ms.ABDELLI Fatima for her patience and precious help.

I would also like to thank the panel of examiners Mr. Ferhi and Ms. Djellout .

Abstract

This piece of research is concerned with the comparison of two famous English playwrights' works: William Shakespeare's Hamlet (1602) and Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (1966). To explore the intertextual dialogic relation between the two plays, I borrowed Mikhail Bakhtin's thoughts; namely, the concepts of Heteroglossia as developed in his Discourse in the Novel (1973) and Carnavalesque developed in the book Rabelais and his World published in (1965). My dissertation fell into two chapters. In the first chapter, I have looked at how Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (1966) is a possible response to Shakespeare's Hamlet (1602). In doing so, I have focused on the language used by Stoppard in his play and the way he echoes the Shakespearean lines. The second chapter is devoted to analyzing carnivalesque forms in both plays and how Stoppard uses parody as both a way of debunking Shakespeare's seriousness and a tactic to depict the modern man's view of the universe. It has been demonstrated that in spite of the fact that several centuries separate the two plays, Stoppard's intention is to reply to Shakespeare's Hamlet (1602) in terms of language and characterization, through his absurdist tragic comedy Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (1966).

Key words: comparaisn, intertextuality, dialogism, Heteoglossia, Carnavalesque, parody, debunking, tragic comedy.

Table of Contents:

▪ Dedication	I
▪ Acknowledgements	II
▪ Abstract	III
▪ Contents	IV
I- Introduction	01
Endnotes	07
II- Methods and Materials	08
Endnotes	16
III-Results	17
IV-Discussion	18
<u>Chapter One: Stoppard’s <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i> as a Heteroglossic text</u>	18
Stoppard’s play as a revision of Shakespeare’s <i>Hamlet</i>	19
Endnotes	29
<u>Chapter two: Tom Stoppard’s <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i> as Carnivalization of Shakespeare’s <i>Hamlet</i></u>	30
a) The Carnavalesque in Tom Stoppard’s <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i>	32
b) The Grotesque in Stoppard’s <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i>	37
c) Endnotes:	46
IV- Conclusion	48
V-Bibliography	50

I. Introduction

The following piece of research falls within comparative literature which aims to compare two plays written by two famous English playwrights: Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602) and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966). This study elucidates the parallels between two plays written by English playwrights that belong to different epochs. My aim is to prove that in spite of the fact that several centuries separate the two plays, many similarities in terms of language and technique are found.

It becomes apparent that William Shakespeare and Tom Stoppard belong to different historical and literary eras. On the one hand, William Shakespeare was born toward the end of the Renaissance period and was one of the first to bring the Renaissance fundamental values to the theatre. He influenced many generations of writers, and even after his death his impact continued to appear in later writings. *The Tragedy of Hamlet* (1602) is one among the most "powerful and influential" works of the literary world. Tom Stoppard, on the other hand, is an ambitious English playwright whose plays delve into the deeper philosophical issues of the postmodern era. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, initially performed in 1966, marked Stoppard's successful entry into the world of playwriting.

Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* was written during the twentieth century and can be classified as a contemporary drama, as it deals with the absurdity of the human nature and its incomprehensibility. At that time, the focus was on the strict depiction of real life and the use of theatre as a means to challenge social norms and repression. It should be noted that contemporary drama, which functions as a reflection of modern life, witnessed the appearance of several movements and evolved over time.

However, despite its evolution, contemporary drama with its several forms and styles kept looking to portray the stories of those who belong to the lower rungs of society and mirror their real life struggles. Stoppard imbeds his play with the fundamental features of

contemporary drama in order to echo the absurdity of the modern man and challenge some classical views in the world of playwriting.

Therefore, this study deals with the intertextual dialogic relation between two plays written by two English playwrights who belong to two completely different if not contrasting epochs: the Renaissance and the contemporary period. I aim to investigate whether the two texts are influenced by the playwrights' social and cultural contexts and how this change in context gives birth to a shift in perspective from a classical world view which calls for an ordered universe and a serious high culture in *Hamlet* to an opposing postmodernist view full of confusion and lower cultural forms in *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead*. To explore the intertextual dialogic relation between the two plays, I borrowed Mikhail Bakhtin's thoughts; namely, the concepts of Heteroglossia as developed in his Discourse in the Novel (1973) and Carnavalesque developed in the book Rabelais and his World published in (1965).

a. Review of the Literature

In recent years, a great bulk of criticism has been produced on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. The two plays which were a real success to their authors, motivated a great number of critiques from different perspectives to review them: feminist, postmodernist, and so many other critics were produced as an attempt to answer some of the audience's queries and to shed light on some ambiguous aspects of the plays.

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602) which is considered to be one of the greatest pieces of literature of all times inspired so many authors and offered a chance for parodists and other adaptations on more than one occasion. Among the early twentieth century literary criticism on Shakespeare is A.C. Bradley's book entitled *Shakespearean Tragedy (1904)*, one of the most influential works of Shakespearean criticism ever published. Bradley writes that

Hamlet is one of the best four Shakespearean tragedies accompanied by *Othello*(1604), *King Lear* (1606), and *Macbeth* (1606)¹. According to Bradley, what makes of *Hamlet* a great play is the fact that it deals with universal themes: good vs evil, revenge vs guilt, hesitation vs betrayal, and how it mirrors the different universal issues in an astonishing way. He also comments on the case of the character of Hamlet, who stood defenseless in front an overwhelming series of events after the death of his father, and his mother's hasty remarriage with his uncle.

Haddaway's Study is another critic who has reviewed Shakespeare's play. He comments on the absurdist treatment of *Hamlet* by modern writers including Stoppard's adaptation .He argues that if the language of *Hamlet* is said to be inspirational and provides a voice for the various human concerns, and Hamlet's experience and struggle is felt and experienced by every human at least once in their lives, then the adaptations of the dilemma should continue. He also comments on the different ways adopted by modern and contemporary comparative literature while dealing with the 'Hamlet's dilemma' as he calls it. Thus, the aim of the study is to gather some of the absurdist works that dealt with the dilemma of *Hamlet* including Stoppard's play, regardless of the way it is approached or solved, it is just another absurdist play and illustrate Shakespeare's influence in the world of literature that is noticeably not subject to doubt.²

Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* has acquired a high reputation as a modern classic and has been the center of interest for many critics. It is worth mentioning that Stoppard's play, besides being a masterpiece that looked backward to *Hamlet*, also comments on contemporary culture. Among the critics who dealt with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, we refer to the study of Schlueter, Charles A. Dana Professor Emerita of English at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania and a Shakespearean academic.Schlueter,as cited in Benjamin Gross's article,argues that Stoppard

brought Shakespearean characters out of the grave they were put in and imbued them with life in an attempt to create an extratextual existence outside of Hamlet³. In reviving Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Stoppard experiments whether dramatic characters can have any independent continuing existence or autonomy while confronted by an image given to him in an earlier work. Schlueter writes: “By appropriating Rosencrantz and Guildenstern-exhuming them from their English graves-Stoppard could test and contest the imperative of the ambassador’s announcement and the title and force of his own play.”⁴

Another study of the Play is done by Professor Sydney Homan, in his book *A Mirror for Staging Hamlet: Directing Shakespeare (2004)*. Homan comments on Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*’s first appearance, and how it was viewed by theatergoers. He asserts that despite borrowing much from Shakespeare’s play, Stoppard’s play has its own originality and can stand on its own as a complete play. Homan adds that despite being criticized and rejected when it was first performed on stage by observers who found it too imitative of Shakespeare’s play and lacking in originality in the sense that it brought nothing new, Stoppard’s play has its own originality that makes of it a great play⁵.

Many critics, have paid tribute to the complexity of Tom Stoppard’s play, the inventiveness of the playwright and his masterly use of language. Anthony Callen comments in his essay on Stoppard with the following assessment: “it is one of the best plays written by the new generation of English playwrights which has absorbed with such success a valuable lesson in dramaturgy from its contact with the European tradition”⁶.

Among the critics who joined the two plays together, we cite the study of Marea Mitchell; an associate professor of English at Macquarie University, entitled *Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: Transformations and Adaptation (2007)*. Mitchell focuses on the notion of transformation, which according to her, can be applicable on both texts separately and on the relationship between them. Transformation and adaptation allow

the creation of a new text that can stand on its own from another older text and avoids value judgment about which of the texts is better. Furthermore, she suggests an example from the two plays where transformations are displayed and how these transformations changed the audience's view of the plays and particularly of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which according to her, has been altered by Stoppard's adaptation of the story.⁷

b. Issues and Working Hypothesis

The above review of literature contains many studies about both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Tom Stoppard *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. It becomes evident that, since their publications, the two plays have been the center of interest for many scholars and academics that ventured to examine the two plays from different perspectives. Yet no study, to my modest knowledge, has offered an analysis of the two plays together by implementing Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of Dialogism. Therefore, our concern in this research is to shed light and examine the dialogic relationships in the discourses contained in the two plays. In order to accomplish this, we will read them closely and try to expose how the voices that construct the two texts interact with each other.

First, I have noticed that both playwrights chose to put human experiences, sorrows, and search for answers about life into words that can be performed on stage, and that was incarnated in character's quest for identity and their attempt to understand the reason of their existence and about chance, fate, and death. Besides, they allowed the theatre to be such a warm place where the words can burst and where the audience can see a performance so close of real life. Second, it is noteworthy that the title of Tom Stoppard's play is a line from the last act of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* when the messenger comes back to declare that »Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead⁸.” Though the death of the two characters is only a marginal detail in the last scene of *Hamlet*, Stoppard makes of them the center of his play and

the departure toward a new story that deals with the parts of their lives that were not covered in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Methodological Outline

As for the methodological outline of my work, it will be composed of four sections. First, I will provide a brief introduction of the subject of our research and some literary reviews written on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, followed by the issue and working hypothesis. In the Method and Materials section, I will provide a short summary of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory and borrow some of its concepts that we think are relevant to our work. Besides, I will include the biographies of both Shakespeare and Stoppard, and the short summaries of the two plays that I intend to compare in relation to Bakhtin's concepts of Heteroglossia and Carnavalesque. In the Results section, I will provide the findings of our research. Then will come the discussion section that will be divided into two parts. In the first part, I will implement Bakhtin's concept of Heteroglossia to find how Stoppard's play is dialogically connected to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and how it is an answer to it. While in the second part, I will implement the concept of carnival to show how Stoppard uses techniques to inverse Shakespeare's play and transform it from a tragedy into a tragicomedy. Finally, I will provide a general conclusion.

Endnotes

1. Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1905.
2. Gerhard Fischer, Bernhard Greiner. *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-theatre and Self-reflection*. BRILL, 2007.
3. Schlueter, June. *Dramatic Closure: Reading the End*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995.
4. Ibid
5. Homan, Sidney. *Directing Shakespeare: A Scholar Onstage*. Ohio University Press , 2004.
6. Anthony Callen, "Stoppard's Godot: Some French Influences on Post-War English Drama", *New Theatre Magazine* 10, 1, Winter 1969, p. 30.
7. Mitchell, Marea. (2007). "Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: Transformations and Adaptation". *Sydney Studies in English*.vol33.
8. Shakespeare, William .*Hamlet*, edited by George Richard Hibbard, Oxford UP, 2008.

II. Method and Materials

1. Method

In this section, I aim to introduce the theory that I think is relevant to our study of the two plays. Therefore, I intend to bring in some explanations and important definitions of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory in order to provide an analysis with a strong and coherent theoretical foundations, In so doing, I will rely on Michael Holquist's translation of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory .

Mikhail Bakhtin's Theory of Dialogism

To check my hypotheses and analyze the above mentioned issue, I decided to follow and borrow some concepts from the theoretical guidelines of Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* to show the dialogic nature of the two plays .

Dialogism is a concept associated with the Russian philosopher, theorist, and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). Though Bakhtin's major writings were published in the 1920s and 1930s, he remained almost unknown beyond the Soviet Union until translations of his works in the 1970s brought him to the attention of the literary world and gave him a massive and growing impact. The term 'Dialogism' was first introduced in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky (1929)*. According to Bakhtin, any form of speech is always a dialogue, i.e, the words uttered by a speaker carry a meaning and expect an answer from the listener. The utterances interact with each other creating a dialogue. He says :

The word in living conversation is directly blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes and answers, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation in any living dialogue. The orientation towards an answer is open, blatant and concrete.¹

Dialogism, though being coined decades before Kristiva introduces the concept of intertextuality which borrows immensely from Bakhtin's work developed in his *Dialogic Imagination (1981)*, it is usually classified as a kind of intertextuality to avoid confusion.

The theory of dialogism blossomed out and under the shadow of Stalinism. It started as a rejection of monologism as a method established by the Russian government led by Stalin, after which Stalinism is named, and whose aim was to prevent people from the freedom of speech. At the period of Stalinism, people had no right to express their point of view and the only truth believed and accepted was the one of the Stalinist government. Living in a Stalinist Russia where the voices are oppressed, Bakhtin was aware of the adverse effects of Monologism and proposed his theory of dialogism, which according to him, will make place for dialogue and preserve the freedom of speech, since every human being has the right to resist, agree and disagree. Consequently, Dialogism opens room for the interaction of many voices without being interrupted and promotes one's point of view instead of the shared viewpoint. In order to complement the term Dialogism, Bakhtin introduces other concepts such as Polyphony, Heteroglossia and Carnival.²

a. The Concepts of Heteroglossia and Polyphony

Polyphony and Heteroglossia are two important concepts in the dialogic theory and are interrelated in a complementary way. Polyphony is the name for one method by which Heteroglossia can enter the novel, in the form of characters' discourse. The term Polyphony means multi-voicedness of the text. It refers to the existence or simultaneity of multiple voices within a single text and the conflicting voices interact with each other without interrupting each other's freedom. In other words, in the polyphonic text the voice of the author is only one among others and does not have the control or the power to curtail other characters' voices and the characters are given full freedom to express themselves without being interrupted. Michael Holquist states about the history of the coinage of the term by

Bakhtin that:

The author of a novel, for instance, can manipulate the other not only as another, but as a self. This is, in fact, what the very greatest writers have always done, but the paradigmatic example is provided by Dostoevsky, who so successfully permits his characters to have the status of an "I" standing over against the claims of his own authorial other that Bakhtin felt compelled to coin the special term "polyphony" to describe it.²

Another important concept in Bakhtin's theory is Heteroglossia. The term Heteroglossia (multi-linguagedness) is any utterance or a speech act, springing from a previous utterance and being constructed in anticipation of a future response; it is either a question or an answer or an agreement or disagreement³. Heteroglossia, then, opens room for negotiation and interaction. For instance, every meaning within a text happens in a social situation in which a number of opposing meanings could have been made and this text derives its social meaning from the degree of opposition with those alternative meanings. Language in the heteroglossic perspective acknowledges the existence of other opposing meanings and offers invitation for interaction that may create harmony and even disharmony sometimes.

b. The Concept of Carnival

Another concept that is relevant to our study is Carnival. Bakhtin introduces Dialogism through the notion of Carnival, such a notion is based on the works of Rabelais and is a way to debunk the official discourses and high culture. The term was coined by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1968) and *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1963). Carnivals are exceptional events where reality is reversed, social taboos are broken, and authority is disrowned. It offers the opposite image of the world where people go beyond their fears as for instance the king can be discrowned and a fool can be elected and crowned king just for laughter's sake. Besides, dogmatic topics such as death or religion become open to parody. However, what is important according to Bakhtin is not the objects of laughter but rather the perspective which the laughter creates. Furthermore, carnival is different from acting on a stage in the sense that people in carnivals are somehow between real life and art⁴.

It must be noted that the concept of carnival is studied from different sociological and psychological angles. Our aim here therefore is to study the concept from a literary perspective.

2. Materials

In this part of our dissertation, I will provide some important materials that we think are relevant to our study. First, I will provide biographical elements of William Shakespeare and Tom Stoppard. Second, I intend to add a short summary of Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602).

a) The Biographical Background of William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is an English poet, playwright and actor .He was born in Stratford –upon Avon in 1564. He was the third child of John Shakespeare, and he had two older sisters, Joan and Judith, and three younger brothers, Gilbert, Richard and Edmund. Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway in 1582. Shakespeare was a man of theatre and influenced many writers who followed his style and even parodied his famous tragedies. His writings were produced mainly at the period of the Renaissance in Britain, and he was regarded as the world's greatest dramatist and most influential writer in the English history.

In addition, Shakespeare was a prolific playwright during the Elizabethan era between 1585 and 1613 and was called England's national poet and nicknamed the Bard of Avon due to his remarkable contribution to the theatre. In his beginnings, he produced many comedies and histories that were of a great success and then focused on writing tragedies where he produced the most influential and most performed plays in the world including *Hamlet* (1602), *King Lear*(1606), *Othello*(1622), and *Macbeth* (1623) which were the best plays produced in this genre. Shakespeare's tragedies, written in his later period after 1600, were universal and timeless. But the most famous and popular one is probably the tragedy of

Hamlet(1602) that deals with the theme of betrayal and moral failure. Today Shakespeare's legacy is admired, studied by scholarly world.

The Biographical Background of Tom Stoppard

Tom Stoppard is a Czech born British playwright and screen writer. He was born in 1937 in Czechoslovakia. Stoppard had a very harsh and unstable childhood. First, he left his country because of the Nazi occupation of the land and moved with his family to live as war refugees in the Indian Himalayas. Later, he moved to Britain and settled there with his mother and brother. Stoppard was only four years old when his father died in war who previously volunteered in the British army. The loss of his father inspired him to write his book *Tom Stoppard in Conversation (1994)*, in which he narrates how his father died and also contributed in shaping his career as a writer .In 1945, Stoppard's mother married a British army Major Kenneth Stoppard and the latter gave them his name .Tom Stoppard was very annoyed by his stepfather's ideals and his attempts to make of him a perfect Englishman and had always felt a kind of estrangement and a rupture with those standards his stepfather kept talking about.

Years after being educated in Nottingham and Yorkshire in 1960, he became a journalist and then a playwright. Tom Stoppard was a very productive and dynamic writer who started his career as a short radio playwright and then moved to explore the world of playwriting to which he added a lot. Later, he became known for his plays that covered the different universal issues and covered universal issues and themes. He established his place in the National Theatre which at the time had an essential role in directing political views in society. His play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* marked his successful entry into the world of playwriting in 1966 and was the first play to gain recognition.

In his later works, Stoppard declared that he will focus more on writing about the heart and detach himself from the argumentative works as, according to him, he became less shy

about emotional openness and started to explore another genre in the world of literature where he soon established a place among the most famous figures of English literature.

Tom Stoppard had built a very shining career in the world of playwriting and received many awards for his works .In July 2013, he was awarded the PEN (Poets, Essayists and Novelists) Pinter Prize for “determination to tell things as they are”⁵. Stoppard’s love of writing allowed him to produce interesting, influential, and most performed plays in the English theatre.

b) The Summary of *Hamlet* (1602)

Hamlet, prince of Denmark, is heartbroken after the death of his father. As he comes back from school to mourn his father, he is faced with the disgusting fact that his mother gets married with his uncle, and that neither of them respects the memory of the dead king. Hamlet who could not hide his frustration and grief towards his mother and his uncle, starts to behave in a violent way towards everyone and pretends to be mad.

Hamlet’s transformation bothers Claudius who soon sends for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, friends of Hamlet, in order to spy on him. One night, Hamlet hears from his friend Horatio that the guards perceived a ghost that resembles king Hamlet the previous night. Hamlet and Horatio then decide to join the guards to wait the ghost to appear again.

When the sunset comes, the ghost appears and Hamlet follows him .The ghost tells him that Claudius poisoned his ear and planned to kill him in order to marry his wife and take possession of the throne. Hamlet, shocked by what he has heard from the ghost, vows to avenge the murder of his father and makes a plan with the help of Horatio. The plan is to perform the scene of the murder and watch Claudius’s reactions while the play is performed. Hamlet sends for the troupe of tragedians and orders Horatio to watch the reactions of king Claudius. While everyone is watching, Claudius appears surprised by the performance. He

leaves the room in a hurry affirming Hamlet's doubts, and Hamlet follows him but mistakenly stabs Polonius while arguing with his mother, Gertrude.

As Hamlet's frustration and violence becomes more frequent, Claudius decides to execute him and sends a letter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ordering the execution during his trip to England. Hamlet uncovers the content of the letter, changes it causing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's execution instead of his, and then returns to Denmark. In Denmark, Ophelia's brother, Laertes, furious about the killing of his father and his sister's madness, decides to kill Hamlet. During the fight, Gertrude accidentally drinks from the poisoned drink prepared by Claudius and dies, and Hamlet is also wounded back by Laertes' poisoned sword. Prince Hamlet hears from the dying Laertes that it is Claudius who planned for his death and dies, affected by his wounds. Finally, Hamlet angrily forces his uncle to drink from the same poisoned cup and kills him. At the end of the play, the dying Hamlet asks Horatio to tell his tale.

c) The summary of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966)

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead is a three act play written by Tom Stoppard in 1966. The play starts with a portrayal of two Elizabethans sitting in some land in which the narrator provides poor details about the setting.

The play opens as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are betting on the toss of a coin and the winner takes the coin and puts it in his bag. The coin lands on heads over sixty times declaring that Rosencrantz is the winner. Guildenstern who keeps losing the bet, tries to hide his discomfort with the doubtfulness of the situation and tries to give possible explanations about this improbability, yet he stands incapable of finding any strong justification.

Guildenstern, then, tries to remember how the story of the bet started in an attempt to find an explanation to his continuing loss, but both characters seem to not have any memory about their past. They only remember that they are sent for by a messenger for a matter of

extreme urgency they completely know nothing of. Along the way, as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern move trying to remember what happened before the coming of the messenger, they meet a group of tragedians led by someone called the player. The latter offers them to purchase a performance and tells them what kind of performances they usually offer. As the negotiations about the price of the performance proceed, Rosencrantz who is displeased with the high price, offends the tragedians that soon start packing to leave. Guildenstern, then, intervenes to conciliate the tragedians by proposing a bet and because the troupe of players lost all their money in the bet, they agree to perform for free.

At the end of act one, the scene changes suddenly and the two friends are in the royal court where they see Ophelia running away. It seems as if she is quarreling with Hamlet. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern move to meet Claudius and Getrude who tell them that they were sent for to spy on their old friend Hamlet and find out the secret behind his transformation, especially after the death of his father. After they meet the king, the two friends discuss about how they feel so ridiculous and start to make a plan in order to achieve their mission and figure out what disturbs Hamlet. Although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern think they are prepared for the meeting, Hamlet, who quickly realizes their intentions, shatters their preparation and stands still and vigilant in front of their questions. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, disappointed by their failure, watch the tragedians perform the story that Hamlet prepared. The show emulates the plot of "*Hamlet*" and although it mirrors clearly the execution of the two spies sent for by the king, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern seem unable to identify who the spies are.

The last act opens in pitch darkness. Guildenstern and Rosencrantz find themselves on a boat with a letter that commands that they have to escort Hamlet to England where he will be executed, but as Hamlet hears them speaking, he changes the content of the letter ordering the execution of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and left them in a fraught situation. At the end of

the play, both Rosencrantz and his mate Guildenstern face their unavoidable fate predicted in the title of the play. Darkness takes place and the two courtiers disappear from view.

Endnotes

1. MarchenkovaLudmila A, Joan Kelly Hall, GerganaVitanova. (2005). *Dialogue with Bakhtin on Second and Foreign Language Learning: New Perspectives* Routledge.
2. Holquist, M. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world*. (London: Routledge,2002), 34.
3. Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays* (C. Emerson, Trans., M.Holquist, Ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
4. Bakhtin,Mikhail. *Rabelais and his World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky .Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
5. Playwright Tom Stoppard wins 2013 PEN / Pinter prize for telling ‘things as they are’.StarTribune, July 30, 2013.
6. Nesari,AliJamali, “Dialogism versus Monologism: A Bakhtinian Approach to Teaching”. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 205 (2015) : 642 – 647.
7. Nesari ,AliJamali,Shirkhani, Fatemeh, “Bakhtinian Dialogic Concept in Language Learning Process”. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 205(2015):510-515
8. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tom-Stoppard>
9. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Shakespeare>

Results

In this part of our research, we have shed light on the results reached after implementing Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism on William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602) and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966). We singled out the reason why the two plays, which are centuries apart from each other, could be gathered within a comparative study.

Therefore, our analysis of *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* has shown that both plays have dealt with the same themes but from different perspectives. Stoppard appropriates Shakespeare's most philosophical scenes and reproduces them within a contemporary dramatic work full of humor and farce. We attained these results through implementing Bakhtin's concepts of Heteroglossia and Carnival as developed in his book *Rabelais and His World*.

The first chapter of our dissertation has shed light on Heteroglossia in Stoppard's play. We have demonstrated that Stoppard's play which is several centuries apart from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* serves as an answer to Shakespeare, as he echoes him in terms of language. To better clarify the relation of Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* to *Hamlet*, we studied the treatment of two selected motifs in *Hamlet*: death and madness. We have shown that Stoppard revises Hamlet's motifs through presenting the view point of his absurd protagonists Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The second chapter has dealt with Carnavalesque and Grotesque imagery in Stoppard's play. After the analysis, we have come to the result that Stoppard borrows from Shakespeare's text and thoughts, and degrades them through his use of farce and irony. In addition, Stoppard has written his play to answer Shakespeare with whom he enters in a hidden polemic in order to show his opposing point of view. The grotesque part has focused on examining how Stoppard debases Shakespeare's play through his characters' use of vulgarities .

Chapter One:

Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* as a Heteroglossic text

Tom Stoppard *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a play that deals with the struggle of the modern man to find meaning in life while faced with its randomness and its enigmatic aspect. It also deals with the postmodern literature in relation to Shakespeare.

The play starts when two common men struggle as they go through an ambiguous series of events that put them inside a huge maze that they cannot make meaning of. Unable to understand anything, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern helplessly try to build a conversation and interact with each other in an attempt to find some explanations about their state and figure out the reason why they encounter so many ambiguous incidents. However, the two mates fail to communicate their ideas because language does not seem to carry meaning anymore and an atmosphere of confusion takes place.

In this chapter, we intend to implement the concepts of Heteroglossia coined by Mikhail Bakhtin in his book entitled *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975). The concept of Heteroglossia challenges the idea of the linguistic creativity. According to Bakhtin, a novel is constructed from a diversity of styles and voices and any utterance or speech act springs from previous utterances. Thus, Stoppard's play can be considered as a heteroglossic text which takes its meaning from the remodelling of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

First, at the surface level, the title of the play is a line taken from Shakespeare's play and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the protagonists of Stoppard's play, are minor characters created by Shakespeare. In addition, Stoppard's text as a whole is a play within a play which belongs to a different historical and literary era but which could not have existed without Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?¹

Tom Stoppard made use of the two minor characters from Shakespeare's play and put them in a new context which is different from the classical one. In doing so, he has to make several changes especially at the level of language. Stoppard's intention behind the use of such language is to portray the struggle of the modern man in search for purpose in a world devoid of meaning. To achieve this aim, he includes multiple voices so as to deal with the topic from different angles and perspectives. It is noteworthy that the reader follows the play through each character's view and sees how reality appears to each character. Moreover, Stoppard provides each character with a unique voice to interact with each other and breaks the confusing atmosphere each with his own logic without curtailing each other's freedom.

Therefore, this part of our work focuses on exposing the dialogic affinities between the plays under study. In his theory of Dialogism, Mikhail Bakhtin defends the idea that language both in its spoken and written forms, is dialogic. Every utterance or word is a response to previous speeches. The language used by an author is not a dictionary language. It contains other voices by writers who have already used that language.

Stoppard's play as a revision of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

Thus, Stoppard answers Shakespeare by revising the condition of Hamlet through focusing on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's existentialist journey. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet's condition is similar to Stoppard's Guildenstern's and Rosencrantz's. However, both playwrights use different linguistic tactics to approach the themes dealt with in their plays.

Stoppard inserts a different style which is centuries apart from Shakespeare's. He uses a certain language that juxtaposes the language used by Shakespeare in his play *Hamlet* and creates a dialogue between the plays. This move creates, in other words, a confrontation

between an Elizabethan and a contemporary English. Thus, we can say that Stoppard's play is a response to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and to his wise and cautious use of language. Although the two plays deal with similar themes of the human suffering with understanding the temporal and the eternal, we notice that the languages used by the two playwrights are not compatible and can be considered, in some ways, opposing. According to Bakhtin, every meaning present inside a speech or a text arises in a social context, in which a number of opposing meanings are present, and develops its social meaning from its relationships with those alternative meanings. So texts are heteroglossic in the sense that they implicitly or explicitly acknowledge the presence of a definite collection of convergent and divergent socio-semiotic realities. So as a result, every meanings within a text happens in a social situation in which a number of opposing meaning could have been made and this text derives its social meaning from the degree of opposition with those alternative meanings.²

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a model of classical drama where everything, including language, is structured and rational. First, the events of the play follow a chronological order starting from a beginning to an ending with a conclusion, which in most cases, reveals that the problematic situation is solved by the hero. In addition to the structure, the language used by Hamlet, despite changing all along the play, according to his tragic growth, can be seen as a serious language that belongs to the high culture, since the protagonist of the play is a prince who belongs to the elite and the upper class. Hamlet is an educated character whose ideas are believed to be of high philosophical value and whose actions blossom out of confidence and self-consciousness. Besides, his language can also be seen as manipulative and indirect in some cases, especially when he wants to reveal or hide something. It is also important to highlight that one cannot speak about Shakespeare without reference to Hamlet's famous soliloquies where he reveals much about himself such as the "to be or not to be" soliloquy

which is the most famous soliloquy in Shakespeare's works and the greatest question asked about the human existence.

The language used in Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a language full of forms and tactics such as farce, irony, burlesque and parody. Stoppard uses this kind of language because the focus of his play is on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who are two postmodern common men who suffer from the unreliability of language in an ambiguous world. Unlike Hamlet who takes control over the events, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's lack of control is represented through the continual use of rhetorical questions that does not help them in anything in addition to the fractured language they use. In order to compensate the failure of language to communicate meaning, Stoppard's protagonists Rosencrantz and Guildenstern use puns, farce and games transforming Shakespeare's tragedy into a 'tragicomedy'. It must be noted that the use of puns, clichés, and irony is considered as a lower cultural form. So Stoppard's use of these forms and tactics is a way to debunk the high culture and the seriousness of Shakespeare's play and his tragic hero, Hamlet, as well. In addition to this, seeing all the stylistics and the ideology adopted by Stoppard in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, the play can be classified as a pure postmodern literature which opposes Shakespeare's play in ideology and style.

Moreover, Stoppard chooses to build his play over the life of the two common men in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In doing so, he does not only include new literary conventions, such as his protagonists Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's use of metaphoric language, games, paradoxes and puns, but also rejects the classical literary view that focuses on kings, princes, or the elite's life and which makes a distinction between high and low forms of art and literature. By focusing on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Stoppard gives an opportunity to all the stories of those common men and women that are worth telling but remained silent for so long because of the focus on kings. Therefore, Stoppard's postmodern work contrasts

Shakespeare's play whose events centers on prince Hamlet and neglects the life of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who belong, in fact, to the common people. However, it may be said without, exaggeration, that no English writer in the history of playwriting has created as many kings than Shakespeare did.

It has been said that Tom Stoppard's play is written on the margin and between the lines of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Stoppard exploits the most noticeable details in the original play to give his characters an identity outside of the limits drawn by Shakespeare. Thus, Tom Stoppard owes a lot to Shakespeare. Stoppard's play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* contains scenes taken directly from *Hamlet*, but it is noteworthy that Stoppard's selection of these dialogues is not done at random. His focus is on the most notable scenes of Shakespeare's play and where his protagonists Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are involved and interact with the other characters from Shakespeare's play. It must be noted that by including Shakespeare's language in his play, Stoppard aims to present a renewed view of *Hamlet*, but with acknowledging the influence Shakespeare's play has on him. In other words, Stoppard remains authentic concerning his protagonists' interconnectedness with Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to whom they owe a lot.

Stoppard utilizes such tactics as an acknowledgement of Shakespeare's influence in shaping his play. Thus, it is not possible to understand the jokes and humor of Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* without making reference to *Hamlet* or at least having an idea about its plot, and it is hard not to think about Stoppard's play whenever one reads or watches Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It is also worth mentioning that Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, with some remodeling, can be classified as an absurd play, since it deals with the existential questioning of two men who seek for answers and experience a hard journey full of events they cannot make meaning of. The focus of the play is on common people who are not given a voice in earlier writings of the classical period

because of the focus on the higher social class like the crowned heads, for instance. Tom Stoppard answers the marginalization of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Shakespeare's play and gives them identities of two postmodern absurd characters. Among the scenes echoed by Stoppard in his play we cite the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy. Hamlet's soliloquy is probably the most famous soliloquy in English literature and has a great significance inside the play. In the below Soliloquy, Hamlet tries to make balance between a state of being and of not being as his burdens become so heavy for him to handle:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause—there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.³

The soliloquy voices Hamlet's inner thoughts and questioning about life and death which are major themes in Shakespeare's play. In that speech, the protagonist Hamlet tries to make balance between a state of being and a state of not being. Hamlet expresses his will to commit suicide and put an end to his suffering but also expresses his fear of the unknown,

since he does not know what happens after death. The soliloquy also asks a very important question about the human existence which perhaps every human asks.

In Stoppard's play, the Shakespearean soliloquy, despite its fame in the literary world and the great philosophical impression that it leaves in the audience's mind, appears only in the background while the protagonists Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have a discussion with each other. While, Shakespeare's protagonist Hamlet tells his famous soliloquy in the background, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are on stage analyzing Hamlet's condition who seems to them mad because he talks to himself and decides to approach him to have a chat. What is ironic is the two mates' inability to solve the complexity of Hamlet's personality and his strange behavior. The below quote illustrates Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's absurd reaction that stands in opposition with Hamlet's thoughtful attitude:

GUIL: Go and see if he's there.

ROS: Who?

GUIL: There.

(ROS goes to an upstage wing, looks, returns, formally making his report.)

ROS: Yes.

GUIL: What is he doing?

(ROS repeats movement.)

ROS: Talking.

GUIL: To himself?

(ROS starts to move. GUIL cuts him impatiently.)

Is he alone?

ROS: No.

GUIL: Then he's not talking to himself, is he?

ROS: Not by himself... Coming this way, I think. (Shiftily.) Should we go?

GUIL: Why? We're marked now.⁴

Stoppard's use of the soliloquy as the backdrop to the action on stage is intentional. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's comical treatment of Hamlet's scene opposes Hamlet's state of mind at the moment he tells his soliloquy. The mates' behavior raises the irony of the audience who seems to know that the moment is not suitable for a chat, because of Hamlet's inner battle at that moment, that is in fact well known from Shakespeare's play. In the above scene, Stoppard's intention is to expose a view of Hamlet as he is perceived by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, rather than the shared view of him in literature. Therefore, Stoppard creates

a renewed and unique view of Hamlet's famous soliloquy imbued in the perception of his dramatic characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The view is different because it deals with Hamlet as an ordinary character with a certain dramatic depth in another play and not as one of the greatest tragic characters of world literature.

It must also be noted that Hamlet's "to be or not to be" soliloquy is paraphrased by Stoppard's protagonists. This is seen through Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's speech on the subject of death. Stoppard's play is full of moments where the protagonists try desperately to understand death. For example, a scene occurs between Rosencrantz and the player when the tragedians perform death on stage. Rosencrantz tells the player that it is not possible to perform death, since death is not something that is well known or well understood. The view of Stoppard's protagonists is in some way absurd. Just like Hamlet, Rosencrantz questions the concept of death and strives to understand its mystery. Thus, it can be deduced that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are, in so many respects, similar to Hamlet.

Another Shakespearean scene is included by Stoppard to draw attention to the futility of life for the absurd man and complexity of language that is a real burden for both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. In the second scene of act two of *Hamlet*, when Polonius asks Hamlet about what he reads and what it is about, Hamlet replies repeatedly: "Words wordswords"⁵. By repeating the word several times, Hamlet suggests the meaninglessness of what he reads. The idea presented here is that humans can be very prolific and produce many words, but the words often seem empty and devoid of meaning. The scene is repeated by Stoppard in the first act of his play. After Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet the king and the queen and are introduced to their mission, Rosencrantz asks his mate about his intention and the former replies that all they have are words, as they lack knowledge about the situation and they can do nothing to change things. Language is not only an important means of communication but also plays a crucial role in everybody's life and development. However, its complexity and

instability can be a real burden in some cases. In Stoppard's play, language turns from being a way to carry meaning into a real jail for Rosencrantz and his friend Guildenstern as words deceive them, and they are no longer able to make sense of their lives or even communicate meaning to other characters. In this respect, Stoppard's mates argue:

Rosencrantz: What are you playing at?
Guildenstern: Words, words. They are all we have to go on.
Rosencrantz: Shouldn't we be doing something constructive?⁷

In the above scene, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's condition, again, contrasts Hamlet's clarity. While Hamlet is lucid and authentic concerning the situation at Elsinore, the two mates seem ignorant and confused especially that language does not carry meaning anymore.

In Addition, madness is another motive from *Hamlet* that is echoed by Stoppard in his play. Hamlet's madness is a manipulative motif and one of the essential issues in Shakespeare's play. It must be noted that the audience is driven towards a maze asking whether Hamlet is truly mad or just pretends to be. Thus, Shakespeare makes his protagonist's madness induce the audience's tears at times and laughter other times. Therefore, Hamlet's madness seems to bother everybody in the castle. Accordingly, king Claudius sends for his old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

In Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, madness is given a special attention as well, since the mission of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in the beginning, is to discover the reason of Hamlet's strange behavior. Indeed, the motif of madness is approached in Stoppard's play and many instances can be provided. The subject of Hamlet's odd behavior appears in the middle of a discussion between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

The two mates think it is imperative to take training on a question and answer game before approaching their old friend Hamlet. So Rosencrantz asks the questions and Guildenstern, who is supposed to play the role of Hamlet, answers him. Unfortunately, while

asked by Rosencrantz about the reason lying behind his attitude, “I can’t imagine”⁸ was all Guildenstern can provide as an answer to his friend’s question.

Another example of Stoppard’s insertion of “madness” in his plays happens in a discussion between Rosencrantz , Guildenstern, and the player. The scene occurs after the two mates meet Hamlet who easily discovers their plan and leaves them analyzing the few things he tells them. Guildenstern protests about Hamlet not revealing much about himself and tells the player that they are told too little. It must, however, be stated that in spite of their efforts to give a closer point of view on Hamlet’s madness, neither Guildenstern nor the player succeed to define it. In this quote an instance of the two mates’ reasoning is provided:

GUIL: He doesn't give much away.
PLAYER: Who does, nowadays?
GUIL: He's - melancholy.
PLAYER: Melancholy?
ROS: Mad.
PLAYER: How is he mad?
ROS: Ah. (To GUIL.) How is he mad?
GUIL: More morose than mad, perhaps.
PLAYER: Melancholy.
GUIL: Moody.
ROS: He has moods.
PLAYER: Of moroseness?
GUIL: Madness. And yet.
ROS: Quite.
GUIL: For instance.
ROS: He talks to himself, which might be madness.
GUIL: If he didn't talk sense, which he does.⁹

Another instance of Guildenstern and Rosencrantz trying to define the motive of madness takes place on the boat. Rosencrantz tries to analyze Hamlet’s condition but it is obvious that his analysis is indecisive and open to doubt. He argues:

ROS: A compulsion towards philosophical introspection is his chief characteristic, if I may put it like that. It does not mean he is mad. It does mean he isn't. Very often, it does not mean anything at all. Which may or may not be a kind of madness.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Guildenstern tries to examine Hamlet’s madness by providing possible symptoms, as it is the only concrete contribution he can ever make on the subject. He says :

GUIL: It really boils down to symptoms. Pregnant replies, mystic allusions, mistaken identities, arguing his father is his mother, that sort of thing; intimations of suicide, forgoing of exercise, loss of mirth, hints of claustrophobia not to say delusions of imprisonment; invocations of camels, chameleons, capons, whales, weasels, hawks, handsaws - riddles, quibbles and evasions; amnesia, paranoia, myopia; day-dreaming, hallucinations; stabbing his elders, abusing his parents, insulting his lover, and appearing hatless in public - knock-kneed, droop-stockinged and sighing like a love-sick schoolboy, which at his age is coming on a bit strong.¹¹

Overall, each of the two mates approaches Hamlet's madness from his own angle but none of them can provide a solid definition or a precise assessment of his behavior. All the two mates can provide, instead, are preconceptions that remain open to doubt. Thus, Hamlet's madness remains indefinable and intangible. This is illustrated in a conversation between the two mates and the player:

Player: Why?
Guil: Ah. (To Ros). Why?
Ros: Exactly.
Guil: Exactly what?
Ros: Exactly why.
Guil: Exactly why what?
Ros: What?
Guil.: Why?
Ros? Why what, exactly?
Guil: Why is he mad?!
Ros: I don't know!¹²

To finish with, after I have implemented the concept of Heteroglossia, I have come to conclude that Stoppard puts forward the perception of two common men who in Shakespeare are not heard and induces the audience's empathy with their condition. Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern illustrate a phase that modern men go through on their way to shaping their identities and finding meaning in life. However, while confronted by fate, they remain speechless and struggle to find out why they are created and what the meaning of life is. So, one might say that Stoppard's play is a heteroglossic text which echoes Shakespeare's in terms of language and answers him through presenting the twentieth century view of Hamlet's antiheroes Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Important passages and motifs are echoed

from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are revisited by Stoppard in his absurdist tragic comedy creating a different atmosphere from the one the audience experience in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Endnotes

1. Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*, edited by George Richard Hibbard, Oxford UP, 2008,141
2. Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays* (C. Emerson, Trans., M.Holquist, Ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
3. Shakespeare, William .*Hamlet*, edited by George Richard Hibbard, Oxford UP, 2008,63
4. Stoppard,Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* .New York: Grove Press, 1968,
5. *Ibid.*, 84
6. Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*, edited by George Richard Hibbard, Oxford UP, 2008.
7. Stoppard,Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* .New York: Grove Press, 1968.
8. *Ibid.*,30
9. *Ibid.*, 36
10. *Ibid.*,49-50
11. *Ibid.*,84
12. *Ibid.*, 49
13. Nesari,AliJamali, "Dialogism versus Monologism: A Bakhtinian Approach to Teaching". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 205 (2015)
14. Jeffrey Wilson (2019): "The Meaning of Death in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*", ANQ:
15. A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews, DOI: 10.1080/0895769X.2019.1697193.

Chapter Two:

Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* as a Carnivalization of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

In this chapter, we shall rely on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of Carnival as developed in his book *Rabelais and His World*, and we will try to find its elements in both plays. We will also inspect how Stoppard degrades Shakespeare's play by inverting its characters and inserting new strategies such as mockery and farce. It is, however, noteworthy, the aim of this carnivalization or degradation of the official and original text is not always negative since, according to Bakhtin, it leads to renewal and regeneration.¹

Before studying the important ideas of this chapter in detail, I believe it is important to draw attention to the remarkable difference between the writing styles used by Shakespeare and Stoppard in their plays. The former makes his characters speak in verse while the latter makes them speak in contemporary English. This difference in styles is due to the different historical epochs during which the plays are written. On the one hand, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written in the sixteenth century; the play is a story of vengeance that resonates the themes and the problems of the Renaissance. The period witnessed the rebirth of the classical ideas and considered man as a valuable and noble creature whose existence is meaningful and important. On the other hand, Stoppard's play, whose events are based mostly on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, takes an opposing trajectory and includes the themes of the absurd drama.

Thus, the two playwrights take two different trajectories in their narratives. Shakespeare tries to convey a profound message to the audience through the complex character of prince Hamlet. The protagonist's hesitation is presented in a brilliant way through the soliloquies and the use of verse. However, Stoppard opts for a brave step by reversing Shakespeare's characters and putting them in an absurd context where pointlessness and insignificance take

place. Stoppard carnivalizes Shakespeare's play by adding elements of farce and irony to the serious tone of *Hamlet*. Thus, Stoppard's comedy comes mainly from parodying Shakespeare's plot and characters. Bakhtin gives a great importance to parody in his theory of Carnavalesque. He argues that in parody, which is part of his carnival theory, the author speaks in someone else's discourse. It does not follow the same orientation as the original discourse but contrasts it in order to build his own text². In other words, Bakhtin's Carnavalesque focuses on some specific types of speech such as stylization, hidden polemic and parody. In parody, the author introduces someone else's discourse in his own work but does not follow the same orientation as the original version. It rather inserts an intention that is opposed to the original one. In other words, parody is when an author uses another author's thoughts with the intention of debunking its seriousness or ridiculing it. So the remodeled text functions as an answer to the original one, as it reflects a different point of view.

Therefore, one of the features of Carnival and Carnavalesque, according to Bakhtin, is the role reversal. Carnival is where social authority can be debased and any kind of dominance is thrown off³. All that is official and serious is mocked, a peasant could dress as a King and a king could be discrowned. It is, in other words, the contrary of what happens in real life. To illustrate, Stoppard inverses the roles of Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and Hamlet in his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, making the existential questioning of two minor characters of Shakespeare the center of his play. Meanwhile, prince Hamlet appears only in the backdrop as an unimportant detail. The image of Hamlet, prince of Denmark, is morally and intellectually lowered and replaced by a futile existential journey of two absurd characters from a lower social class. Meanwhile, Shakespeare's play is a tragedy with occasional moments of comedy. Stoppard's play can be considered as a comedy with occasional elements of tragedy. It is, thus, noteworthy that both plays aim to mirror the

complexities of life, and just like the human life, neither of the plays is completely funny or entirely tragic.

a) The Carnavalesque in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

The theme of death is typically present in both plays and is of great importance. Life and death are two opposites, yet inseparable themes. The mystery of death has occupied thinkers for centuries and remains unsolved despite the various explanations and theories provided by philosophers, religious men, and even some literary figures. According to some philosophers, there is not much to argue about death except admitting or denying its existence. Yet both Shakespeare and Stoppard attempt to give a definition of the theme each from his own platform.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, death plays a crucial role as in any other tragedies. Starting from the death of the king Hamlet offstage until the last scene of the play where all of the queen, the King, Laërte, and Hamlet die poisoned. Hamlet's first encounter with death in the play is when the ghost comes to declare the chronicles of the murder to him. Affected by the ghost's story, Hamlet decides to have his vengeance and kill his uncle Claudius, his father's murderer. At that moment, prince Hamlet starts thinking about life and death, wondering about a state of being and state of not being. He tries to make the balance through his famous "to be or not to be" soliloquy in which he first describes death as a long sleep that releases a person from all the burdens and troubles of life, a way to escape the bitter fate that throws on him terrible things that he cannot handle. Death is described as the end wished, in which everyone finds release. However, Hamlet remains confused as he stands in the midst between a strong desire to make an end to his life that seems for him too heavy to handle and the fear of the unknown.

Death seems to be an alien concept to Hamlet and that is mainly the source of his hesitation to make decisions and his over thinking. In fact, the question of Hamlet's soliloquy

is the question of humanity, since humans are often too terrified by the things they ignore. Death, for instance, remains a mystery that can be neither denied nor solved. In Shakespeare's play, death is portrayed as frightening yet desirable. Scary because nobody knows what may happen after it, as it is an undiscovered country, from which no visitor returns as Hamlet describes it in his soliloquy:

But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns²

However, death is also given a noble and luxurious description and considered as something strongly wanted, as it liberates people from their burdens that may haunt them their entire life. For Shakespeare, to die is no more than to sleep where the dead person can dream. It is clear that Hamlet is so accepting of the idea of death despite his hesitation and confusion about some of its sides. It is worth mentioning that Shakespeare has included some religious dimensions in his plays despite the religious oppression that England endured at that time. Shakespeare was not afraid of Queen Elizabeth's oppressive rules against Catholicism and presented catholic characters in his works, including the character Hamlet.

Likewise, Stoppard deals with the theme of death but from an absurdist point of view. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a play about death and that can be deduced from the title. The audience is, in fact, well aware of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's fate from both Shakespeare's script and the title of Stoppard's play that is itself a line from *Hamlet*. Stoppard exploits the theme of death and its inevitability to show his protagonists' absurd nature. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern crave to understand the meaning of death but their lack of understanding is obvious and causes them troubles. The mates' treatment of the theme of death can be considered as degrading and ironic. For instance, while on the boat, Rosencrantz asks his friend whether it is possible for death to be a boat as he thinks they may be dead and then Guildenstern answers that it cannot be a boat, since death cannot be something, and can

just be the opposite of being and the ultimate negative. What is comic is the mates' struggling with the idea of death and dying as a state of negative existence. In this respect, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern say:

ROS: We might as well be dead. Do you think death could possibly be a boat?

GUIL: No, no, no... Death is... not. Death isn't. You take my meaning. Death is the ultimate negative. Not-being. You cannot-be on a boat³

It is obvious that the two mates try desperately to give a definition to the theme but end up more confused each time. Even when interacting with the tragedians, Guildenstern denies the possibility of performing death on stage and rejects the philosophy of the player concerning that:

GUIL: No, no, no... you've got it all wrong... you can't act death. The fact of it is nothing to do with seeing it happen - it's not gasps and blood and falling about - that isn't what makes it death. It's just a man failing to reappear, that's all - now you see him, now you don't, that's the only thing that's real: here one minute and gone the next and never coming back - an exit, unobtrusive and unannounced, a disappearance gathering weight as it goes on, until, finally, it is heavy with death.⁴

Stoppard mirrors the view of the modern man who seeks the understanding of something that seems to be beyond his understanding, and most importantly accepting its inevitability at a moment where faith in religion and God was lost. Thus, it can be deduced from the play that death is the eventual destination regardless of which path man may take and any attempt to oppose this fact leads to loss, as it is the case of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Stoppard directs the audience laughter focusing on the absurd nature of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, their sense of loss, and their struggle to draw a clear meaning of life and death. Consequently, the view of death is debased and becomes a subject of laughter for the audience.

Stoppard's world differs from the solemn and serious world of Shakespeare, where death is described as a tragic factor. Unlike the heroic and tragic death of prince Hamlet, the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is neither fully tragic nor heroic. Stoppard's

protagonists are not heroes but victims of life's circumstances and lack of knowledge; a thing that gives chance to a tragic humor. The play is imbedded with elements of farce and absurd treatment of the subject matter. It is notable that the play takes mainly its comic aspects from contrasting the high seriousness of Shakespeare's style and from lowering the nobleness of its characters.

It is, however, important to note that the two mates' speech about boats creates both humor and hits a serious side of the protagonists' life. Thus, besides creating a humorous effect and dimension to the play, it also has a philosophical depth. The speech can be considered a metaphor of life itself as it is the conclusion Stoppard's Protagonists draw about their journey. Guildenstern argues:

Guil: Free to move, speak, extemporize, and yet. "We have not been cut loose. Our truancy is defined by one fixed star, and our drift represents merely a slight change of angle to it: we may seize the moment, toss it around while the moments pass, a short dash here, an exploration there, but we are brought round full circle to face again the single immutable fact - that we, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, bearing a letter from one king to another, are taking Hamlet to England.⁵

Bakhtin's carnivalesque is related to tragicomedies and is based on the possibility of destroying any limited seriousness and offers a chance to express rebellious or critical tendencies⁶. In other words, all social barriers and higher norms are destroyed and mocked within the Carnavalesque spirit. To illustrate from the play, Stoppard makes the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern unheroic, as he describes death as an ordinary part of their life and not as a tragic process. For instance, when they are at Elsinore to meet the king and the queen, Rosencrantz acts cowardly towards the incomprehensibility of the events and appears comically unheroic. In contrast, his mate Guildenstern, who pretends to be more in control of the events, comments on the fact that death is not more than a natural process and that humans

should find a way to progress in their life, knowing that death is the final destination no matter what they might do. To illustrate :

ROS (a dying fall): I want to go home. (Moves.) Which way did we come in? I've lost my sense of direction.

GUIL: The only beginning is birth and the only end is death - if you can't count on that, what can you count on?⁷

In addition to this, Stoppard's ordinary characters mock the subject of death on more than one occasion. In an ordinary conversation between them, Rosencrantz describes death as lying in a box with no air inside. He, therefore, reduces the concept of death to the lowest possible level of normality and points to the silliness of being haunted by such an idea. The conversation symbolizes the human fearful attitude towards death and its inevitability. What is humorous in the conversation is Rosencrantz's comical analysis of the process of dying. What Rosencrantz fears the most is not death or being locked down in a box, but it is rather the idea of eternity. As Rosencrantz argues about it:

It's silly to be depressed by it. I mean one thinks of it like being alive in a box, one keeps forgetting to take into account the fact that one is dead I mean, you'd never know you were in a box, would you? It would be just like being asleep in a box. Not that I'd like to sleep in a box ... you'd wake up dead for a start.⁸

At the end of the two plays, both the death of Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern occurs, and the death of each carries an important message about the human condition. Hamlet's death is both heroic and tragic as his uncle Claudius and Leartes' plan to murder him with the poisoned sword .At the end of the play, Hamlet takes his father's revenge by killing king Claudius and dies because of his injuries. It can be said that death comes as a relief for Hamlet, as it saves him from the chaos of his thoughts and puts an end to his debate over whether to revenge his father's murder or commit suicide. On the one hand, the death of prince Hamlet grants all of the wishes he desired through the play and enables him to perform both acts. On the other hand, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern behave with their absolute rejection and denial of death until the end of the play. After Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

discover the switching of the letter and know that they are going to be executed, they find themselves in an absurd situation. The two mates helplessly try to find possible explanations to the situation they are driven in and identify where they did do wrong .Ironically, they cannot answer that question too and just disappear from view. Stoppard portrays the incompleteness of humans understanding of death through capturing the perception of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, their dissatisfaction and discontentment with what happens to them, and their questioning .At the end of the play, Rosencrantz, who stands alone after his mate disappears, argues:

GUIL: Our names shouted in a certain dawn ... a message ... a summons... there must have been a moment, at the beginning, where we could have said-no. But somehow we missed it.⁹

It must be noted that there are much more dialogues in Stoppard's play where his protagonists, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, mock of the concept of death and make it humorous as any other theme. This view clearly contrasts and carnivalizes the view of Shakespeare, who portrays the theme of death as tragic and heroic. Both Shakespeare and Stoppard deal skillfully, yet differently with the theme of death; Shakespeare's Hamlet presents an Elizabethan view of the theme, while Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can be seen as the twentieth century ambassadors. According to Bakhtin, the carnivalesque's essential principle is degradation and that it stands on the idea that tragedy is in some way comic and all comedy is in some way tragic and pathetic¹⁰.Hence, the lowering of a high and spiritual concept such as death is what makes Stoppard's play fit Bakhtin's theory of the Carnavalesque.

The Grotesque in Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*

In this part of our work, we show Stoppard's degradation of Shakespeare's play through his characters' behavior and use of "vulgaritys". Grotesque is one of the most important principles in Bakhtin's concept of Carnival. According to Bakhtin, the essential

principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, and abstract⁹. From this definition, we assume that Stoppard carnivalizes his play in a way it degrades and vulgarizes Shakespeare's text, and in particular the character of Hamlet. This assumption comes from the way Stoppard describes his characters' attitude and behavior. In his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tom Stoppard turns *Hamlet* on its head by reducing all of Shakespeare's main characters, including the protagonist Hamlet, to minor characters. Stoppard replaces Shakespeare's Hamlet, who is a complex and fascinating character, with two ordinary courtiers. Hamlet, in Shakespeare's play, is portrayed as a philosophical and meditative character; this is revealed through the soliloquies he delivers from time to time in the play. Although he pretends to be mad, and acts aggressively towards his mother and Ophelia because of the series of events he encounters in the play; alone, Hamlet becomes thoughtful and speaks in philosophical terms. The soliloquies can be seen as Shakespeare's most "brilliant" writing, since they reveal everything that the audience needs to know about the protagonist. Thus, Stoppard focuses more on the characters and their attitudes and puts aside Shakespeare's plot.

Stoppard's vulgarization of Shakespeare's play consists not only of the role reversal but also appears in the characters' use of commonplace. The grotesque imagery, according to Bakhtin, is manifested in the marketplace where all people are melted together into a single unity detached from all existing forms of control. The marketplace language rejects the official one to substitute it by people's unofficial discourse which combines "abuses, curses, profanities, and improprieties."¹¹ Thus, in order to gain a better and deeper understanding of Stoppard's play, it is important to study its relationship to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* under the light of irony. Irony in Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* appears both in the opposition of Hamlet and the two courtiers' involvement in trivial activities. It must be noted that the word games, clichés, and proverbs used by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are

tactics utilized by the author to debase the seriousness of Shakespeare's text. The use of such devices is considered as an insult to the audience's intelligence, since it is an outmoded form of commonplace. As a result, Hamlet's heroic image and speeches are replaced by the two courtiers' absurd dialogues and vulgarities.

Stoppard borrows the absurd view of the human condition and makes of Shakespeare's vision a stage for his play. Unaware of their destiny, the characters in Stoppard's play get engaged in senseless and absurd activities. The play begins with the appearance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in some place wasting their time on a trivial coingame, as they have no other thing to do. As the play advances, Rosencrantz keeps winning whereas Guildenstern loses the game each time. It is remarkable that although Guildenstern is portrayed as possessing more philosophic attitude and intelligence than Rosencrantz, the latter shows his dissatisfaction with the situation and suspects that it must be indicative of something, a thing deeper than a simple coincidence. "Tossing coins" and talking nonsense about supernatural forces and the probability can be considered a kind of defense against fear, the fear of the unknown that haunts Stoppard's protagonists and engenders their personal crisis. In an attempt to explain the problematic situation

Guil: It must be indicative of something, besides the redistribution of wealth. (He muses) List of possible explanation. One: I'm willing it. Inside where nothing shows, I'm the essence of man spinning double-headed coin and betting against himself in private atonement for an unremembered past (He spins a coin at Ros).

Ros: Heads.

Guil: Two: time has stopped dead, and the single experience of one coin being spun once has been repeated ninety times ... (He flips a coin, looks at it, tosses it to Ros). On the whole, doubtful. Three: divine intervention, that is to say, a good turn from above concerning him, cf. children of Israel, or retribution from above concerning me, cf. Lot's wife.¹³

Guildenstern and Rosencrantz's existential struggle becomes more apparent as they step forward in the play. The two mates fail to remember what happened with them earlier that morning and desperately ask questions to each other in an attempt to get a clearer view of the events. Unfortunately, they can hardly answer few of the questions they ask and in case they

get to answer some; then it would be filled with doubt and uncertainty. Stoppard's protagonists have weak or almost nonexistent memories, the reason why they seek answers from the other characters in the play. Memory has an important role in every human's life as it is the means that keeps him connected with his past. Thus, what paralyzes Guildenstern and Rosencrantz and prevents them from taking action is, in fact, the loss of memory. The following quote is an illustration of the idea:

ROS. Oh. I see. (Pause.) I've forgotten the question.
GUIL. How long have you suffered from a bad memory?
ROS. I can't remember.¹⁴

Therefore, the two mates' confusion comes from the loss of memory and the fact that they rely on what the other characters might say. Stoppard's protagonists are told too little when in fact they need to know much. Consequently, they sink deeper in their bewilderment and get lost in the cloudy atmosphere created by the author who obviously does not intend to answer any of those questions. Guildenstern complains:

Guil: We only know what we are told, and that's little enough. And for all we know it isn't even true.
Player: For all anyone knows, nothing is. Everything has to be taken on trust; truth is only that which is taken to be true. It's the currency of living. There may be nothing behind it, but it doesn't make any difference so long as it is honored. One acts on assumptions.¹⁵

In addition, Stoppard uses the identity crisis of his characters as a vein of farcical comedy. The humorous dialogues between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern create comedy, since the two mates confound their own names and identities. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern do not even know who they really are something which induces the audience's empathy and mockery at the same time.

ROS. My name is Guildenstern, and this is Rosencrantz.
(GUIL confers briefly with him.)
(Without embarrassment.) I'm sorry – his name's Guildenstern, and I'm Rosencrantz...
ROS. And who are we?¹⁶

Another instance where Stoppard creates humor upon the theme of identity is in another dialogue between the two mates and the royals. In the castle, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

meet Claudius and Gertrude who ask them to find out the reason behind prince Hamlet's transformation. Unluckily for the two courtiers, the meeting with the king and queen drives them to feel more confused and lost in that world they know nothing of. The Shakespearean plot confuses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and aggravates their existential crisis. Rosencrantz, who seems to be less recognizing of the events and more transparent than his mate, shows his will to escape and walk away from the castle. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's coward reaction creates a sarcastic juxtaposition of Shakespeare's play and degrades Hamlet's heroism. The two mates use clichés to express their fear, since obviously their defense is at its lowest. The following quote is an instance of the idea:

Ros: I want to go home.

Guil: Don't let them confuse you.

Ros: I'm out of my step here -

Guil: We'll soon be home and high - dry and home - I'll -

Ros: It's all over my depth -

Guil: - I'll hie you home and -

Ros: - out of my head -

Guil: - dry you high and -

Ros (cracking, high): - over my step over my head body! - I tell you it's all stopping to a death, it's boding to a depth, stepping to a head, it's all heading to a dead stop -

Guil (the nursemaid): There!...and we'll soon be home and dry...and high and dry ¹⁷

Stoppard combines tragedy and comedy and this creates a grotesque effect. As the play progresses, the two mates' pathetic search for identities becomes more and more farcical because of their humorous treatment of serious matters. In Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's life, there is no sense of security or orientation, only confusion and disorientation and this is illustrated in the following passage :

GUIL: If it is, and the sun is over there (his right as he faces the audience) for instance, that (front) would be northerly. On the other hand, if it's not morning and the sun is over there (his left)... that... (lamely) would still be northerly. (Picking up.) To put it another way, if we came from down there (front) and it is morning, the sun would be up there (his left), and if it is actually over there (his right) and it's still morning, we must have come from up there (behind him), and if that is southerly (his left) and the sun is really over there (front), then it's afternoon. However, if none of these is the case¹⁸

As Rosencrantz and Guildenstern go deeper in the Shakespearean plot, they sink in confusion and ambiguity, something that prevents them from achieving their mission with their old friend prince Hamlet. The meeting with him does not go as planned, despite them believing that they are well prepared for it, they just ruin everything and get easily revealed by Hamlet who recognizes them to be spies at the first sight and misleads them with his tricky answers. Clashed by Hamlet and deceived by their own skills, Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's self confidence breaks down and they come back again to make conclusions about the incident and then end up admitting their failure against Hamlet who wins again. The two mates' use of wordplay, such as 'we made some headway', 'played it close to the chest', 'caught us on the wrong foot', is a metaphor that indicates the breakdown of their self confidence against prince Hamlet's intimidation. The following passage is an illustration of the idea :

Guil: I think we can say we made some headway

Ros:you think so

Guil:I think we can say that

Ros:I think we can say he made us look ridiculous

Guil:We played it close to the chest of course .

Ros (derisively): "Question and answer. Old ways are the best ways"! He was scoring off us all down the line.

Guil: he caught us on the wrong foot once or twice, perhaps, but I thought we gained some ground.

Ros: He murdered us.¹⁹

Furthermore, it is ironic how both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern cannot understand that by desperately watching all of the events happening and not being able to understand anything, they are driven to their deaths written for them; and even though they see their deaths performed in front of their eyes by the tragedians in the play prepared by prince Hamlet, it is still too ambiguous for them because of their absurd reality. When the tragedians perform the spies, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern notice the resemblances between themselves and the two spies and feel familiar with the. However, they cannot recognize that they are the ones referred to in that play, and they approach the tragedians instead, and ask them whether they have met before. In this respect, Rosencrantz argues:

(The whole mime has been fluid and continuous but now ROS moves forward and brings to a pause. What brings ROS forward is the fact that under their cloaks the two spies are wearing coats identical to those worn by ROS and GUIL, whose coats are now covered by their cloaks. ROS approaches "his" SPY doubtfully. He does not quite understand why the coats are familiar. ROS stands close, touches the coat, thoughtfully ...)

ROS: Well, if it isn't! No, wait a minute; don't tell me it's a long time since where was it? Ah, this is taking me back to when was it? I know you, don't I? I never forget a face (he looks into the spy's face) not that I know yours that it for a moment I thought no, I don't know you, do I? Yes, I'm afraid you're quite wrong you must have mistaken me for someone else.²⁰

The above passage is an illustration of Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's uncertainty and misunderstanding of what is happening around them. The poor mates prove once more that they have no control over the events and no independent existence beyond the borders drawn by Shakespeare. This is precisely why all they can do is to get engaged in trivial activities to point out their insecurity in the universe and present philosophical issues.

In addition, Tom Stoppard puts forward the voice of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern reduced in Shakespeare's play. Thus, the development of the events is now seen through the eyes and vision of the two courtiers. This shift from one vision to another provides a different illustration of the story, since now the audience is given a more detailed image of the two spies, who in Shakespeare's play, are no more than shadows, but now are speaking about themselves and in their own terms. Yet, despite of being aware of the anomaly of their situation that is in fact frightening them, they cannot do much to help themselves. Especially that they are stuck under the control of Shakespeare, to whom they owe their existence, and who haunts them and pushes them to behave the way they behave. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern prove that they can have no dramatic continuity outside their original play, and that is seen on more than one occasion all along Stoppard's play. Stoppard's protagonists are condemned not to have any power or control over their lives whenever they leave Shakespeare's plot. Consequently, they are presented more as absurd characters with a

fractured communication and lost minds exhausted by the incomprehensibility of the world and an endless search for answers.

Another humorous device used by Stoppard in his play can be seen in Guildenstern's application of logic to explain futile problems. An instance of Guildenstern incompatible use of logical reasoning takes place in their way to England. While the mates are having a discussion about what they are going to tell the English king once in England, they remember that they possess a letter which is supposed to explain everything. In order to settle the confusion, Guildenstern looks for the letter hoping to find it in his pocket but then discovers that Claudius' letter might be lost. After that, an atmosphere of panic takes place and Guildenstern attempts to give a logical explanation for the incident. Unfortunately, his explanation is unreasonable and induces mockery. In the following quote, Guildenstern comments on the situation:

GUIL: This is all getting rather undisciplined... The boat, the night, the sense of isolation and uncertainty... all these induce a loosening of the concentration. We must not lose control. Tighten up. Now. Either you have lost the letter or you didn't have it to lose in the first place, in which case the king never gave it to you, in which case he gave it to me, in which case I would have put it into my inside top pocket in which case
(calmly producing the letter)... it will be... here. (They smile at each other.) We mustn't drop off like that again.²¹

In addition, the letter section in Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is of crucial importance to the shaping of the events and an obvious example of the mates' failure to manage an important event such as the switching of the letter. Stoppard's protagonists Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have to make a fateful decision concerning the letter, especially after discovering its content which orders Hamlet's head cut off. However, Guildenstern's arrogance breaks in front of the crisis that is about to happen. The following passage can be seen as comical, since it reveals Guildenstern's lack of originality and his failure to make the right decision. Guildenstern says:

Guil: well, yes, and then again no. (Airily). Let us take things in proportion. Assume, if you like, that they are going to kill him. Well, he is a man he is mortal, death comes to

us all, etcetera, and consequently he would have died anyway, sooner or later .Or to look at it from the social point of view he's just one man among many ,the loss would be well within reason and convenience .²²

While Rosencrantz and Guildenstern sink in their indecision and inability to respond, Hamlet who is behind the scenes hears their talk about him and about the letter. Unlike Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet takes control of his life and does not lack the originality as Stoppard's protagonists. Consequently, he changes the content of the letter which orders his execution and orders the execution of his old friends who betrayed him. When the two mates discover the letter switching, Hamlet leaves already, and all they can do is grieve over what happened and panic over what is going to happen. The two mates realize that it is too late to change their fate and avoid their end that seems closer than ever. They admit that the reason they are in that awful situation is that they are mistaken somewhere but now they are relieved.

At the end of the play, both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern protest their inevitable end which they think they do not deserve. In the dying scene, Rosencrantz is disappointed and complains about how things turn out to be against them in spite of the fact that they have done nothing wrong: "We've done nothing wrong! We didn't harm anyone. Did we?"²³. While Guildenstern suffers from lack of memory even a few moments before he dies, he answers his friend's question by: "I can't remember"²⁴. Stoppard's protagonists cannot even recognize that it is their passivity that causes their downfall. They fail to take up an action that may save their life even when they most have the chance to change things.

To conclude, Stoppard points out the absurd life of the twentieth century man by leaving his characters both powerless and humorous at the same time. In addition, by making his protagonists engage in trivial activities and portraying their absurd reasoning of the universe, Stoppard debases Shakespeare's seriousness and use of logic. These forms of triviality used by the playwright allow him to achieve feats of humor and create sarcasm within a tragic atmosphere. This fusion of seriousness and triviality gives birth to Stoppard's

tragic comedy which changed the audience's view about Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and shows an unknown perspective of it. Thus, it can be said that in terms of characterization, Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* functions as a carnivalization of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Endnotes

1. Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*, edited by George Richard Hibbard, Oxford UP, 2008.
5. Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. New York: Grove Press, 1968, 73.
6. Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
7. Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. New York: Grove Press, 1968
8. Ibid., 78.
9. Ibid., 87.
10. Ibid.,
11. Ibid.,
12. Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and his World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. New York: Grove Press, 1968, 19-20.
16. Ibid., 40
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 48

19. Ibid.,16
20. Ibid.,27
21. Ibid.,42
22. Ibid., 40
23. Ibid.,
24. Stoppard,Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* .New York :Grove Press
,1968.,77

III. Conclusion

This modest work has ventured into proposing a new reading of the literary relation of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) to William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1602). I have attempted to look closely at the literary affinities between the two plays by relying on the theoretical approach of Mikhail Bakhtin of Dialogism. Dialogism which is a form of intertextuality that stands on the idea that literary texts must be studied in their relation to previous texts. In other words, a literary text is said to be a response to other texts written previously. In doing so, I borrowed Mikhail Bakhtin's thoughts; namely, the concepts of Heteroglossia as developed in his Discourse in the Novel (1973) and Carnavalesque developed in the book Rabelais and his World published in (1965). Thus, this theory allowed us to explore both texts and show how Stoppard's play is dialogically interconnected with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

I have shown that the two plays are interconnected in spite of the fact that several centuries separate them. Stoppard's play answers Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by revising the language of Hamlet and his most famous passages and reproduces them from the point of view of his absurd characters. I have singled out two important themes in Shakespeare's play which are death and madness and proved that they are echoed by Stoppard who remodeled them in a way they fit the absurdity of the modern man. I have come to the conclusion that Stoppard presents a vision of the modern man via the eyes of two of Shakespeare's Renaissance characters.

In addition, I have found that Stoppard painted his novel with Carnavalesque and Grotesque imagery. Stoppard creates humor and debases Shakespeare's seriousness by making his protagonists engage in trivial activities and try to give logical explanations about them. By mixing the serious and the "profane" to portray some aspects of the world of the modern man, Stoppard creates a grotesque effect that both answers and degrades

Shakespeare's text. I have also found that an important theme in Shakespeare's play which is death is given a carnivalesque description. The protagonists Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's reasoning and understanding of death is humorous and degrading.

The grotesque characters in Stoppard's play serve as a useful means of creating humor and degrading the text of Shakespeare. Countless instances are provided in Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. The play's humorous instances stem from the fact that Stoppard's modern protagonists attempt to make meaning of their lives but fail and then their failure pushes them to behave ridiculously, a thing that creates a grotesque effect and induces the audience's mockery. So, Stoppard's protagonists are forgetful, they forget their names, confuse their identities, and their artificiality is easily visible. The audience easily uncovers that their comic side is no more than a mask to hide their fear and absurdity.

Finally, this dissertation has dealt with the intertextual dialogic dimension in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Yet, the scope of this comparative literature can be extended to a further study discussing other issues from other different perspectives.

IV. Selected Bibliography

Primary Sources:

- 1- Stoppard, Tom. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. New York: Grove Press, 1968.
- 2- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*, edited by George Richard Hibbard, Oxford UP, 2008.

Secondary Sources:

- 1- Anthony Callen, "Stoppard's Godot: Some French Influences on Post-War English Drama", New Theatre Magazine 10, 1, Winter 1969.
- 2- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- 3- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and his World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- 4- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (C. Emerson, Trans., M. Holquist, Ed.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- 5- Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1905.
- 6- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus* (Justin O'Brien, Trans.). New York, NY: Random House, Inc. 1958.
- 7- Gerhard Fischer, Bernhard Greiner. *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-theatre and Self-reflection*. BRILL, 2007.
- 8- Homan, Sidney. *Directing Shakespeare: A Scholar Onstage*. Ohio University Press, 2004.
- 9- Jeffrey Wilson (2019): *The Meaning of Death in Shakespeare's Hamlet*, ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews, DOI:10.1080/0895769X.2019.1697193.

10-Lynn E ,Cohen . “Bakhtin’s Carnival and Pretend Role Play : A comparison of Social Context” .American Journal of Play 4 , no .2 (2011).

11-MarchenkovaLudmila A, Joan Kelly Hall, GerganaVitanova. (2005). Dialogue with Bakhtin on Second and Foreign Language Learning: New Perspectives Routledge.

12-Mitchell, Marea. (2007). “*Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: Transformations and Adaptation*”. Sydney Studies in English.vol33 .

13-M, Holquist. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world*. (London: Routledge,2002).

14-Nesari ,AliJamali , “Dialogism versus Monologism: A Bakhtinian Approach to Teaching”. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 205 (2015) : 642 – 647.

15-Nesari ,AliJamali, Shirkhani, Fatemeh, “Bakhtinian Dialogic Concept in Language Learning Process”. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 205(2015):510-515

16-Schlueter, June. *Dramatic Closure: Reading the End*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995.

17-Pew,Maji.Theatre of the Absurd in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead .University of Dammam, 2013.

Web site:

<http://www.longwood.edu/staff/mcgeecw/notesoncarnivalesque.htm>

<https://www.123helpme.com/essay/Theatre-Of-The-Absurd-In-RG-162747>

<https://www.galaxyimrj.com/V2/n6/Maji.pdf>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Tom-Stoppard>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Shakespeare>

<https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/SSE/article/view/530>