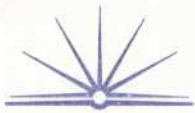


Section 1 - Module A

Question 1 - transformations.

The transformation of the text Hamlet by Shakespeare, into Stoppard's contemporary text Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead highlights the ability of a composer 'to say something new.' The exploration of this transformation deals with the issue that "audiences know what to expect and that's all they are prepared to believe." By applying new aspects on the fundamental issues of life, Stoppard ~~blatly~~ defies what the audience expects, thus giving them ~~something~~ something new to aspire to.

The way in which Stoppard transform Hamlet's text in a contemporary, assists in a different reading of the narrative. The intertextuality of Hamlet with Stoppard's play highlights these contrasting language transformations. Instead of taking

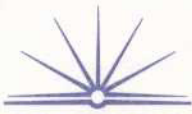


the formal approach using Shakespeare's rhyming verse, Stoppard implements more comical colloquial language. ~~Thus~~ With this in mind we see a heightened connection with the leading characters and the audience. The manipulation of Shakespeare's language, permits the audience to take a light hearted towards the events of Hamlet, transmitting a ~~versified~~ comical image. Hamlet claims, "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a King of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams." Stoppard's interpretation, "He's depressed! Denmark's a prison and he'd rather live in a nutshell." Stoppard's language also assists in illuminating a different view ~~of~~ on the theme of fate and destiny. Ros and Guild, cannot enforce action or behaviour, but can use and control words. Words assist them in escaping the limits placed on them by Hamlet. Clearly it is evident, that through the transformation



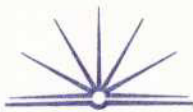
of language techniques, Stoppard takes a light hearted view on the consequences of the world.

Transformation assist in illuminating the difference between each composer's views on fundamental issues. Ros and Cui's fate and destiny is determined by Shakespeare. Yet again, we Ros and Cui looking to others for direction. They are confused by the inability to control action. "We have no control. None at all". Stoppard transforms the destiny of the Prince of Denmark, into the destiny of humanity. The exploration of fate has changed, as a result we see evidence ~~of~~ of the questioning of reason. The narrative is now a story about our own destiny. Evidently Stoppard is saying "something new". Offer another meaning to Hamlet. Stoppard also illuminates the inevitability in death and choice, highlighting that the only certainty in life is death.



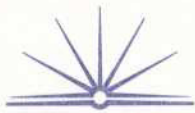
Stoppard ~~Stoppard~~ portrays death as a simple absence, Shakespeare as "violence, blood and duels." Hamlet explores the preference of life and death in his "to be or not to be soliloquy." "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer... or take arms against a sea of troubles." He comes to the conclusion that life is preferable to death. In this case, we see Stoppard incorporating this view in his text, but of course in a more light hearted fashion. Rosencrantz imagines death as life in a box. Concluding that "Life in a box is better than no life at all." Ros and Guild's death is signified by simple being unable to re-appear. We see Stoppard transforming death from the dramatic to the everyday.

Appearance versus reality also seems a prominent focus in Stoppard's transformation. Like other critics he suggests that Ros and Guild are not the self deceptive



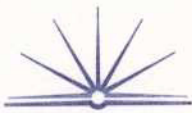
characters of Hamlet, but are swept away by forces greater than themselves. He offers and questions their motivation, asking "Did we not have control at some point." The power of self deception is also evident. "One may smile and smile and be a villain." Through Stoppard's exploration, ~~then~~ he suggest that we are discovered by others. His ability to 'say something new' takes the mystery and romance out of the inevitable, revealing reality.

character transformations, also assist in Stoppard's portrayal of his contrasting opinions to Shakespeare. Hamlet is an account of the events in Hamlet life. By renaming the play, & we see the power of the character shift. The result, he is no longer a ~~character~~ protagonist, but a character of periphery. Persuading our sympathies to no longer lie with him. Ros and Anil are now central



to the exploration of main themes. Their transformation from secondary characters, to those of more significance being the drive behind the play. We sympathise with them and their inevitability, as we see it as our own. Shakespeare portrays these characters as self centred and ~~manipulative~~ manipulative. This provides Stoppard with a challenge to present a different reality. Stoppard takes the basis of Shakespeare's confusion between Ros and Guildenstern, bringing it to another level. We see the characters themselves confused about who is who. "I am Guildenstern..... Sorry..... I am Rosencrantz". ~~But~~ Although the characters are transformed, ~~they~~ ~~but~~ there is no evidence that they are now the hero. Stoppard just provides Ros and Guild with a more recognisable motivation.

The intertextuality of these two plays,



is what illuminates Stoppard's ability to show a different view. As a result the contemporary composer is saying 'something new.'