

# The Role of Metaphoric Language and its Analysis in Tom Stoppard's *the Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

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## Abstract

Metaphoric language in Tom Stoppard's plays has a crucial role; the nature of language itself, how it comes to have significance within context and how the exchanges between characters maybe interpreted differently by an audience. What Stoppard wants to insist on his plays is the unreliability of language in an unreliable and meaningless world. He goes beyond Absurdism by breaking the distance between audience and the actors. In his play, human beings are unable to communicate with each other, because they are afraid of using a language that does not have a particular form. Sometimes it is serious, sometimes witty, sometimes meaningless and sometimes difficult to comprehend. Sometimes the turn in language from literal meaning to metaphorical meaning is delayed, sometimes it is has hastened, sometimes it is elided entirely. The focus of this study is on the varying degrees of wittiness. Three kinds of metaphor: Simple, complex, difficult have found in this paper. There is a relationship between wit, transference and interference in the process of creating metaphor. Tom Stoppard's early play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* has provided the readers with examples of witty metaphor in generating absurdity.

**Keyterms:** Metaphor, stoppardian style, Lack of communication, The Theater of Absurd, literal / nonliteral language, verbal -humor, word-play, wit.

## 1. Introduction

“Words, words, they're all we have to go on” (Stoppard 41).

Absurd drama attacks language as a very inadequate and unreliable tool of communication. The researcher's aim in this chapter is to trace the ways by which Stoppard has used language and compared his use of language as a means of communication. In order to reach Stoppard's aim, the researcher seeks to discuss Stoppard's use of language under the subtitles of 'Lack of communication' and 'Verbal Humor' including 'Verbal Games' and 'Word-play', by which Stoppard tries to show the unreliability of language as a tool of communication. These issues will be discussed in details in the following sections.

Stoppard's language expresses the ambiguous nature of truth. There is no underlying fixed meaning in words. The lack of control over their lives is mirrored in the fragmentation of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's language and their persistent use of question. The language games that Rosencrantz

and Guildenstern's engage in owe an intertextual debt to the influential Twentieth century philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein (Biggsby 14). Stoppard has appropriated one of Wittgenstein's theories of language which essentially states that language cannot express a universal truth. Language resembles "moves" in a game and outside of the game has no meaning whatsoever. This notion of language having no transcendent value is another point of difference between the two plays. Stoppard also reveals his range of verbal artistry. His play is rich in the playful use of cliché, black humor, irony, puns, burlesque, cultural reference, etc. His use of colloquial and clichéd language to state humankind's existential dilemma serves to undermine the value traditionally attached to Shakespeare's elevated poetry (Biggsby 17-20).

Notwithstanding all this, one should never lose sight of the fact that Stoppard is a playwright and his intention is to entertain the audience. Stoppard's style, especially his humor, wit and comedic timing, is the means by which the bleakness of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is acceptable through the medium of drama.

## 2. Lack of Communication in *The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

Stoppard is aware of the insolvable communication problem of human beings; his plays are meaningful communication as the works of Beckett. While language in Beckett's plays express the "break down" and the "disintegration of language" (Esslin 86), it itself begins to collapse in Stoppard's (Biggsby 13). *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is also full of puns, clichés and question marks to show that language has lost its function as means of communication since these questions have turned into statements that do not require an answer. Ros and Guil have no control on their speech and "their loss of control is mirrored in fragmentation of their language" (Biggsby 13). In the following, the reader reads:

Ros: I want to go home.

Guil: Don't let them confuse you.

Ros: I'm out of 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 o a dead stop

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

And high and dry ... (Stoppard 27).

In his play dialogue breaks down again and again because there is no truly dialectical exchange of thought in it. Stoppard has used different techniques such as monologues, repetition of words and synonyms to show the disintegration of language.

Guil: Are you happy?

Ros: What?

Guil: What are you going to do now?

Ros: I don't know. What do you want to do? (11)

Ros and Guil are unable to see the truth or comprehend their situation because they have only words to guide them. "Words, words, They're all we have to go on" (41). Andretta in his book *An Analytical Study of Stoppard's plays* notes that Words are a means of avoiding communication and action (Andretta 38). In Stoppard's play words are acts, as action is verbal, According to Nicole Boireau, "the dialogues often carry more cumulative than dramatic power" (Boireau, 141).

Stoppard discusses the philosophical relationship between words, meaning and truth in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*:

Guil: We only know what we're 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 doesn't make any differences so long as it is honored. One acts on assumptions.... (48).

Stoppard has always been aware of the treacherous trait of the words. When an idea is expressed in words, it may lose its true meaning because the words have infinite interpretations, some of which completely different from the original thought. Therefore, Stoppard believes that language is the downfall of ideas and thoughts. Stoppard mentions his belief in the exclamation of Moor, a character in one of his plays, *Jumpers*: "The words betray the thoughts they are supposed to express; Even the most generalized truth begins to look like special pleading as soon as you trap in language" (46).

Ros and Guil are more irritable and less free at court. They have to use Elizabethan blank verse, which is formal and artificial in comparison with the clarity and simplicity of the modern English they had been using before going to the court. Therefore, language limits their freedom (Andretta 28). The player, when asked why he has to have a dumb-show for his play, states: "We are tied down to a language which makes up in obscurity what it lacks in style" (56). The play has many examples of difficulty or absence of communication, for instance:

Ros: So we've got a letter which explains everything.

Guil: You've got it.

(Ros takes that literally. He starts to pat his pockets, etc.) (76)

Stoppard has been successful to use language theatrically to show the inability of language to bring human beings together. His play is dynamic on stage and their dramatic impact of their language is powerful and unforgettable. Language in absurdist world becomes one more unpredictable, unreliable. In *The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* characters even do not know about their names. They are always misunderstanding each other.

Guil: You can't not be on a boat

Ros: I've frequently not been on boats.

Guil: No, no, no what yo've been is not on boats.

Ros: I wish I was dead.

Stoppard is aware also of the power of silence and pause on stage. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* characters indulge in considerable and meaningful numbers of pauses; pauses that are full of each character's differing thought processes, and give the audience enough time to think about the craft of the playwright. Ros and Guil are not very frequently silent, but theatrically their silences are very meaningful. On stage that silence moment is more theatrical than the long speeches. Harold Pinter notes:

"I think we communicate only too well, in our silence, in what is unsaid, and what takes place is continual evasion, desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves. Communication is too alarming" (Guido Almansi 91).

That is why Stoppard's characters easily give up the difficult task of communication meaningfully. They try to give meaning to their speeches through their long pauses and silences. This is another strategy that Stoppard adopts in order to show his distrust to language and communication. Stoppard may be trying to reflect the language problem of the human species; however, he himself has craftily overcome this problem. Stoppard himself has always emphasized the pleasure he takes in language; hence, he notes:

"One element of this preoccupation is simply an enormous love of language itself. For a lot of writers the language they use is merely a fairly efficient tool. For me the particular use of particular word in the right place, or a group of words in the right order, to create a particular effect is important; it gives me more pleasure than to make a point which I might consider to be performed" (Wilcher 34).

Gussow (1996) in his book *Conversations with Stoppard* states that Stoppard treats language like an elastic substance. The language in the pen of Stoppard stretches and shrinks as he pleases (93). Therefore, although Stoppard tries to show the inability of human beings to communicate with each other, he himself is able to communicate meaningfully with his audience in a nice way.

### **3. Verbal Humor (Verbal Games)**

Absurd theatre is often very funny because of the ridiculous attempts to confront the obstacle of passing the time. One of these attempts is the use of games usually verbal. Most of the dramas in Absurd theatre consist of ‘games’ that the protagonists play. These games show that protagonists need something to pass the time, to reduce their fears in confrontation with their deepest feelings about the world they live in and their situation. Stoppard’s play is also an obvious example of this verbal tennis game. The only thing allowed in Ros and Guil’s play is a fresh question; no statements, no repetitions and no rhetoric are allowed. (Bigsby 19) Questions pass the time; they are never answered, have no point and do not lead to any level of emotion:

Guil: What good would that do?

Ros: Practice!

Guil: Statement ! One love.

Ros: cheating!

Guil: How?

Ros: I hadn’t started yet.

Guil: Statement. Two love.

Ros: Are you counting that?

Guil: What?

Ros: Are you counting that?

Guil: foul! No repetitions. Three love. First game to... (p. 30)

Ros and Guil play for the purpose of reliving themselves of boredom and passing the time. They even treat their duty to King and Hamlet as a game. This shows that they use game playing even in their serious duties and therefore, much of their existence is boring:

Guil: I could see that (Beat). Glean what afflicts him [Hamlet].

Ros: Me?

Guil: Him.

Ros: How?

Guil: Question and answer. Old ways are the best ways... (Stoppard 33)

[playing]

Ros: My honoured Lord!

Guil: My dear fellow!

Ros: How are you?

Guil: Afflicted!

Ros: Really? In what way?

Guil: Transformed.

Ros: Inside or out?

Guil: Both... (35).

[After playing with Hamlet]

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.

Ros: He caught us on the wrong foot once or twice...

Ros (simply): He murdered us.

Guil: He might have the edge.

Ros (roused): twenty-seven –three and you think he might have had the edge?! He murdered us (40).

However, their games are not simply a means to pass the time. Here Stoppard solves the problem that Beckett cannot answer. As Anthony Jenkins in *critical essays on Tom Stoppard* notes that our lives may seem purposeless when we busy ourselves “between birth and death,” but that busyness is purposeful and meaningful for ourselves; therefore, one can conclude that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are more clever and “intelligent than their counterparts” in *Waiting for Godot* (54). They try to solve their problems in their games and often play games to find meaning for their unanswered questions.

To admit that Absurd plays are usually very funny does not mean that we should deny the desperation and anxiety underneath the humor. As a matter of fact, these plays can often be very funny or very bleak or both. Victor Cahn in his article *beyond absurdity* states that The humor is possibly bleak for it depends upon laughing at any attempts to find meaning in life and universe; everything is similarly silly: politics, education, religion and, in short, all aspects of life. At the base of this black humor is the Absurdity of language itself. In the Absurd world, language becomes an unreliable and a “deceiving feature of experience” (Cahn). And as Esslin refers to: “In a purposeless world that has lost its ultimate objectives, dialogue, like all action, becomes a mere game to pass the time” (87). Thus the emphasis on verbal humor is one of the major attractions of Absurdist Theater. Language can be used as a tool for passing the time, but not a vehicle for a meaningful communication. Stoppard mocks language in sequences where the characters fail to express what they are thinking because words cannot exactly capture their thought. Instead, they appear ridiculous.

#### 4. Word Games

Stoppard himself plays with the words like his characters. At first, it will be useful to identify some of the features of language that Stoppard uses for his endless word-play. Wilcher says. “The jokes are a series of insights” into many different ways in which communication can break down. For instance, it can be a matter of utterances, which are capable of more than one meaning. The ambiguity, sometimes, lies in the various “syntactical structure” that can be observed in arrangement of words:

Player: The old man thinks he’s in love with his daughter.

Ros (appalled): Good God! We’re out our depth here.

Player: No, no, no –he hasn’t got a daughter –the old man thinks he’s in love with his daughter.

Ros: The old man is?

Player: Hamlet, in love with the old man’s daughter, the old man thinks.

Ros: ha! It’s beginning to make sense! (49).

Here the player attempts to make clear the personal situation of the characters in the tragedy of *Hamlet*. The first purpose of these different kinds of word-play is often to make audience laugh. Moreover, these word-games can perform, in terms of Wilcher, “the additional function of keeping the audience alert to the endless possibilities for linguistic confusion” (33). These verbal games and word-plays show the trickery of language as a means of communication and insist that although language can be very funny and even beautiful, it lacks all what a good communication needs. Language can be used as a tool for passing the time, but not a vehicle for a meaningful communication. Stoppard’s craft in this part and his use of word-plays is much useful and effective.

What Stoppard wants to insist on in his plays is the unreliability of language in an unreliable and meaningless world. His use of clichés, paradoxes, questions followed by no answer. Dramatic language, silences and pauses, verbal games and word-plays, break down of dialogues, his distrust to words and making language funny instead of meaningful are his Theater’s features. In this plays, human beings are unable to communicate with each other, because they are afraid of using a language that does not have a particular form; sometimes serious, sometimes funny, sometimes meaningless and sometimes difficult to comprehend. All they can do is to adopt other tools for expressing themselves; tools such as pantomime, clichés, rhetoric, religion and games. Some of the conversations in the play

indicate the author's belief that language places a limit on what people can express. The characters must confine their feelings within the boundaries of words. Stoppard mocks language in sequences where the characters fail to express what they are thinking because words cannot exactly capture their thoughts. Instead, they appear ridiculous. (Wilcher)

This attempt to direct action through language becomes a game in which both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern participate.

Ros: He talks to himself, which might be madness.

Guil: If he didn't talk sense which he does

Ros: which suggest the opposite.

Player: Of what?

Guil: I think I have it. A man talking sense to himself is no madder than a man taking nonsense no to himself.

Ros: or just as mad.

Guil: or just as mad.

Ros: and he does both.

Guil: So there you are.

Ros: stark raving sane.

Player: why?

Guil: Ah why?

Ros: Exactly.

Guil: Exactly what?

Ros: Exactly why?

Guil: Exactly why what?

Ros: what?

Guil: why?

Ros: why, what, exactly? (67-68)

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern play word game in preparation for their argument with hamlet. Repetitions and rhetorical questions are fouls.

GUIL: What does it all add up to?

Ros: Can't you guess?

GUIL: Were you addressing me?

Ros: Is there anyone else?

GUIL: Who?

Ros: How would I know?

GUIL: Why do you ask?

Ros: Are you serious?

GUIL: Was that rhetoric?

Ros: No.

GUIL: Statement! Two-all (82).

Another example of playing of words in this play:

Ros: What's the matter with you today?

GUIL: When?

Ros: What?

GUIL: Are you deaf?

Ros: Am I dead?

GUIL: Yes or no?

Ros: Is there a choice?

GUIL: Is there a God?

Ros: Foul! No non sequiturs, three-two, one game all (Stoppard 67).

Frequently questions are answered with other questions and it becomes clear that the characters are playing, more seriously perhaps, a similar game to that of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hersh Zeifman categorizes Stoppard as a Post –absurdist. He argues that while the absurd is defined by pessimism in the face of random chance and chaos, Stoppard is always consciously and cautiously optimistic:

Tom Stoppard is similarly concerned in his drama with the metaphysically precious and mysterious, thus his attraction to the theater of the Absurd. But while frequently exhibiting an absurdist outer shell, Stoppard`s plays contain at their core a subversive sweetness that ultimately bursts forth and cracks that shell; this unique blend of shell and core produces the distinctive post absurdist tone of much of Stoppard`s theater (198).

## 5. Simple Metaphor in *The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

In order to demonstrate what is meant by a simple metaphor, the researcher refers to a statement made by Hamlet in Tom Stoppard`s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Hamlet is here questioning his friends Ros and Gill about their arrival in Denmark:

Hamlet: what have you, my good friends, deserv`d at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Gill: prison, my lord?

Hamlet: Denmark`s a prison ... O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space (57).

Although these metaphors are simple ones, they are not entirely safe from having wit onto them. Nonetheless, Shakespeare has constructed two simple metaphors in these lines which do not incorporate wit, from a literal standpoint, the country known as Denmark is not a prison and there is not infinite space in a nutshell. Metaphors will taken at their face value and connotative or sub textual speculations will be disregarded.

In King`s statement in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*: “We are tied down to a language which makes up in obscurity what it lacks in style” (56), a simple metaphor makes reference to language which privileges confusion over individual quality. Terence Hawkes echoes that to use language essentially involves getting at one kind of reality through another. The process is fundamentally one of transference (Stoppard 60). Not only is the transference process in metaphor, but this is not to say it is the simplest. According to Hawkes, language as a system is transference. Transference must be the most significant step in the process of metaphor construction. Ros and Guil stay on the horror of human silence in their elaborations on this first threat:

Ros: Took the very words out of my mouth

Guil: You`d be lost for words.

Ros: you`d be tongue-tied.

Guil: Like a mute in a monologue.

Ros: like a nightingale at a Roman feast (62).

Similes reappearing here are strange. In a world where an actor has literally lost his tongue but remains an actor, he becomes a mute in a monologue .There is another example here:

Guil: And receive such thanks as fit as a king`s remembrance.

Ros: I like the sound of that. What do you think he means by remembrance?

Guil: He doesn`t forget his friends (40).

In this line as fit as king`s remembrance is a simple metaphor. Meaning of sentence is direct. As the researcher mentions, simple metaphors are not witty because the transference process is too brief and direct. It has been shown that the process of transference must be connected to economy or time. Although economy is a factor in wit, it was determined that economy of process characterizes simple metaphors. The characteristics which the researcher has chosen to represent wit were not a consideration in the creation of these metaphors. Simple metaphors adhere closely to the basic process

of construction for a metaphor; qualities are transferred from literal language to an object that exists in figurative language. Since the transference process was simple and made for non-witty metaphors, it may well be expected that a lengthy or extensive transference process accounts for wittiness in other metaphors. This hypothesis will be examined in the following paragraphs. For now, it must be sufficient that the transfer itself is at least as significant as the ideas that are transferred.

## **6. Complex Metaphor in *The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead***

In this part the researcher wants to look closely at metaphors that involve some amount of interference. The process that constructs them elaborates upon each of the three steps that constitute a metaphor; the researcher has termed these metaphors complex. A complex metaphor can be interfered with at any of the stages of its construction whether expressed in literal language during the moment of transference of qualities or as a figure of speech within the figurative realm. In the previous paragraph, it was hinted at that the transference process has perhaps a greater role to play in the formulation of metaphor than many suspects. A fine example of a complicated metaphor is given by Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*: “The Colour yellow is mystical experience shared by everybody” (14). The three steps of metaphor construction are relatively easy to identify: from literal language “yellow”, a turning –away occurs so that one is left with a figurative expression “a mystical expression shared by everybody” “mystical is defined as that which transcends human understanding. Yet the color yellow is easily viewed by human beings. For now and future reference, the researcher refers to the literal expression, here according to Richards and Black, yellow as the tenor or frame, and a mystical experience acts as the vehicle or focus. The path of transference is not as direct in a complex metaphor. Another example from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*:

Player King: Well I can do you blood and love without the rhetoric, and I can do you blood and rhetoric without the love, and I can do you all three concurrent or consecutive, but I cannot do you love and rhetoric without the blood. Blood is compulsory they’re all blood. You see (23).

The Player King’s reference to the kinds of plays that the traveling actors put on shows incorporate themes of “blood” or “rhetoric” or “love”. Notice, how these plays are created through one another “blood and “love” is possible, as is “blood” and “rhetoric”, and so are all three “concurrent or consecutive”, but “blood” is necessary for all of them. A play may be rhetorical or loving, but it must be bloody first of all. In this case the metaphor is derived from a metaphor. The technical term for this is “repetition by iteration”: an incremental expression that is created by the generation of one term upon another: an expression produced by another expression.

Recall the use of Hamlet’s two metaphors regarding Denmark: it is a prison and he would rather live in a nutshell. Now, examine Rosencrantz’s interpretation of Hamlet’s comments which is actually a summary of Act Two:

Ros: Denmark’s a prison and he’d rather live in a nutshell: some shadow-play about the nature of ambition, which never got down to cases, and finally one direct question which might have led somewhere, and led in fact to his illuminating claim to tell a hawk from a handsaw (57).

Here Stoppard has concentrated the information given in nearly one hundred fifty lines into one sentence. Rosencrantz’s brief report of Hamlet’s remarks would probably induce laughter in the theatre because of the condensed form in which the information is relayed. The actor (a metaphorical figure) asserts his connection with the audience (the literal world) by referring to the work of William Shakespeare, a figure from the literal world, but here it is important to remember that Stoppard is alluding to Shakespearean verse. Of course, the point is irrelevant if one is not aware of Hamlet and the speech which Stoppard is parodying. In this example, reduction as an interfering factor generates wit in the metaphor. Hence, there is some correlative between manifestations of economy and the space of transference in a metaphor.



As I.A. Richards remarked somewhat concisely in his book *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* “when a man has a wooden leg, is it a metaphoric or a literal leg?”(118), it should be noted that the distinction between the literal and the figurative is not always so simply distinguished.

## 7. Difficult Metaphor in *The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

The researcher introduced several different methods by which a witty metaphor is created. Metaphors that are interfered with possess some delay in transference, and an additional, unknown force is acquired by the metaphor-receiver. Sometimes displayed as familiarity, the end result of such metaphors is that the metaphor-receiver is placed in a position in which he or she does not necessarily agree with or desire the comparison. Ways in which wit affects these metaphors were also briefly touched upon; these included the factor of economy. According to Susan Purdie, The stage therefore shows us two realities: real life and enacted behavior. The theatre is a metaphor: from the literal lives and beings of the audience. Transference of qualities is somehow achieved by breaking through the figurative in order that the metaphorical life of the stage can be presented (212). Notice once again, however, that the moment of transference is the most elusive and the most significant within the world of the play, Rosencrantz states that:

Ros: I feel like a spectator an appalling business. The only thing that makes it bearable is the irrational belief that somebody interesting will come on in a minute. . . . (41).

This ironic comment, an actor remarking on the distastefulness of being a spectator is entirely conceived of and presented on the stage. Audience is drawn into a situation in which it was determined that some metaphors are completed regardless of our willingness to comply with them. In the theatre, one must navigate carefully between belief and disbelief, and judge the end results accordingly. Stoppard characterizes his plays as follow:

Paradox appeals to me. Paradoxes have a shape, like a piece of architecture. It's that which is appealing. They're like a thought process in concrete for me-you can see the actual shape and structure of it (Delaney 223).

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a paradox is “a statement or proposition which, despite sound reasoning from an acceptable premise, leads to a conclusion that is against sense, Logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory” (*paradox*).

Here is a metaphor in which Guildenstern is clarifying a comment Rosencrantz has made: “[England is] Just a conspiracy of cartographers, you mean?” (107). Though the word “England” is semantically rife with associations, a “conspiracy of cartographers” is an idea that gives one pause. This metaphor requires a bit of explanation. As the reader understands and defines the words “conspiracy of cartographers”. Stoppard may be alluding to a more spiritual process of the construction of nationhood or patriotic sensibilities. Constructing a framework by which a conspiracy of cartographers” may be judged witty, is difficult enough. If the first half of the metaphorical expression, England, is set aside, and an attempt is made to generate another “focal word” to use Black’s vocabulary for this “frame,” a conspiracy of cartographers, we are confused. Not only are we incapable of thinking of any example of a “conspiracy of cartographers.” but the “two ideas” we are getting for “one” are wholly inappropriate: England, a country, entirely concrete. Stoppard’s wit in this metaphor concurs. A simile would be more effective than a metaphor, since a simile asserts similarities in being, whereas metaphor deals with being. In other words, it would be easier to grasp a “conspiracy of cartographers” if one knew what it was to be like, instead of eliding this step and handling a metaphor that simply states what a “conspiracy of cartographers” is. In metaphors which fail to work because one half of the expression has no network of associated ideas. Confusion may be improved by expressing the comparison in another way, perhaps in a more detailed fashion, but note that the result may not necessarily be as funny.

There is a metaphor in which the tenor or focus refers to more than one meaning which is expressed by the vehicle or frame, and so the metaphor is not wholly completed, the transference of

qualities from one portion of the metaphor to the other is not entirely achieved. There is another example, The Player King's explanation of himself and his troupe demonstrates this awareness, "We're actors-we're the opposite of people" (63). In fact, this situation is tripled in its self reflexivity, while maintaining that they are not people, actors (who are people) represent this group, and these lines (literally true? Metaphorically true?). It is not that one cannot come up with examples that suit the modifier "opposite of people." it is that all of the comparisons seem to be incorrect.

Are animals the opposite of people? Are vegetables? Academics? None of these seem to be entirely true, since they ought. At the same time to qualify as "humans who act as their profession". What about the advanced biological and genetic knowledge that constitutes knowledge of people do these scientific functions and processes have an opposite? Unless one is fairly advanced, one cannot discuss the ways in which "people" may be said to have their opposite form, species, etc. Finally, we are left with no remaining options, and here the laughter emerges. E. B. White states that "Humour is a final emotion like breaking out in tears. A thing gets so bad and you feel so terrible that at last you go to pieces and it's funny. Laughter does just what tears do for you" (Eastman 343).

It is characteristic of Stoppard to define his attitude towards his work in terms of a metaphor. Unfortunately, the wittiness of his comments often fails to shed light on the literal meanings of his remarks, the same scenario that takes place in difficult witty metaphors. The following quotation from *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* illustrates a situation such as this. When one portion of the metaphor does not have an identifiable set of values:

Ros: 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 can't not-be on a boat (108).

As humorous as this exchange may be, the unavoidable realization remains that neither "death" nor "the ultimate negative" has any objective significance to us. We as human beings know the ways in which death can occur. Living man, who has not been dead before, speaks knowledgeably on the topic of death. At the same time, Rosencrantz is not telling the audience anything of which they are not already aware. Death is not being, and one cannot be on a boat because if one was on a boat, one would be on a boat-one begins to understand.

Gradually, metaphor has developed from a figure of speech into a possible and permissible way of thinking, though it has only done by virtue of embracing its opposite, just like humor or more specifically, wit.

## **8. Conclusion**

Regarding this paper Tom Stoppard's play was analyzed based on the usage of metaphoric language and it seemed that metaphor has the capability of eluding another metaphor. As the researchers studied the play, it was found that metaphors are constructed by a turning away from literal language to figurative language. The trope is constructed by the transference of qualities from a literal entity to a figurative one. The researchers have classified metaphors into three groups based on the simplicity evidenced by their transference processes: the first one is traditional metaphor was called in this study simple metaphor. The second one is Complex metaphor was completed with a measure of interference in their construction; the third one is difficult metaphor that is not completed due to significant interference. The brevity of process demonstrated by simple metaphors proved that this group of metaphors was not often found to be witty. There are situational concerns and the tension between appropriateness and inappropriateness. Customarily, it expresses wit. The same was true for difficult metaphors, which tended to incorporate concerns including deliberate misunderstandings and an inability to compare two entities, and thus evoking wit. Some factors such as economy and the desire for play were noticeable in all of the categories and influenced the function of a witty metaphor greatly. At the root of all of these manifestations of form, literal, figurative, and wit, the transference

process lies. If shortened, simple metaphors are obtained; if lengthened, witty metaphors result, if elided entirely literal language becomes synonymous with figurative language.

The readers also find that Stoppard's early play, *The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* has the contents of absurdity within but are not full absurd play. Stoppard believes in the unreliability of language as a tool of communication and he craftily expresses and show it in their plays. By using techniques such as clichés, pun, humour, silences and pauses, he demonstrates his distrust to words and language. The theme of death, lack of identity and lack of logic are also common in both plays.

The readers discover that *The Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a play in which plot and characters from Shakespeare set in a Beckettian ambience. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* has many affinities with the Theatre of the Absurd, but it is not absurd in the sense of Beckett or Ionesco's plays. The fact is that, the situations and happenings of the play are Absurd for the characters, but not for the audience. Ros and Guil may not know who they are and see no logic at work, but it is simply because of their lack of knowledge. Their situation does not bring the meaning of Absurdity to the audience. The play mostly shows the roles of chance, fate and outer mysteries in life. It may suggest that life can be surprising and bizarre, but not absurd –“not with a capital A, like Ionesco” (Stoppard qtd. in Delaney 33).

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